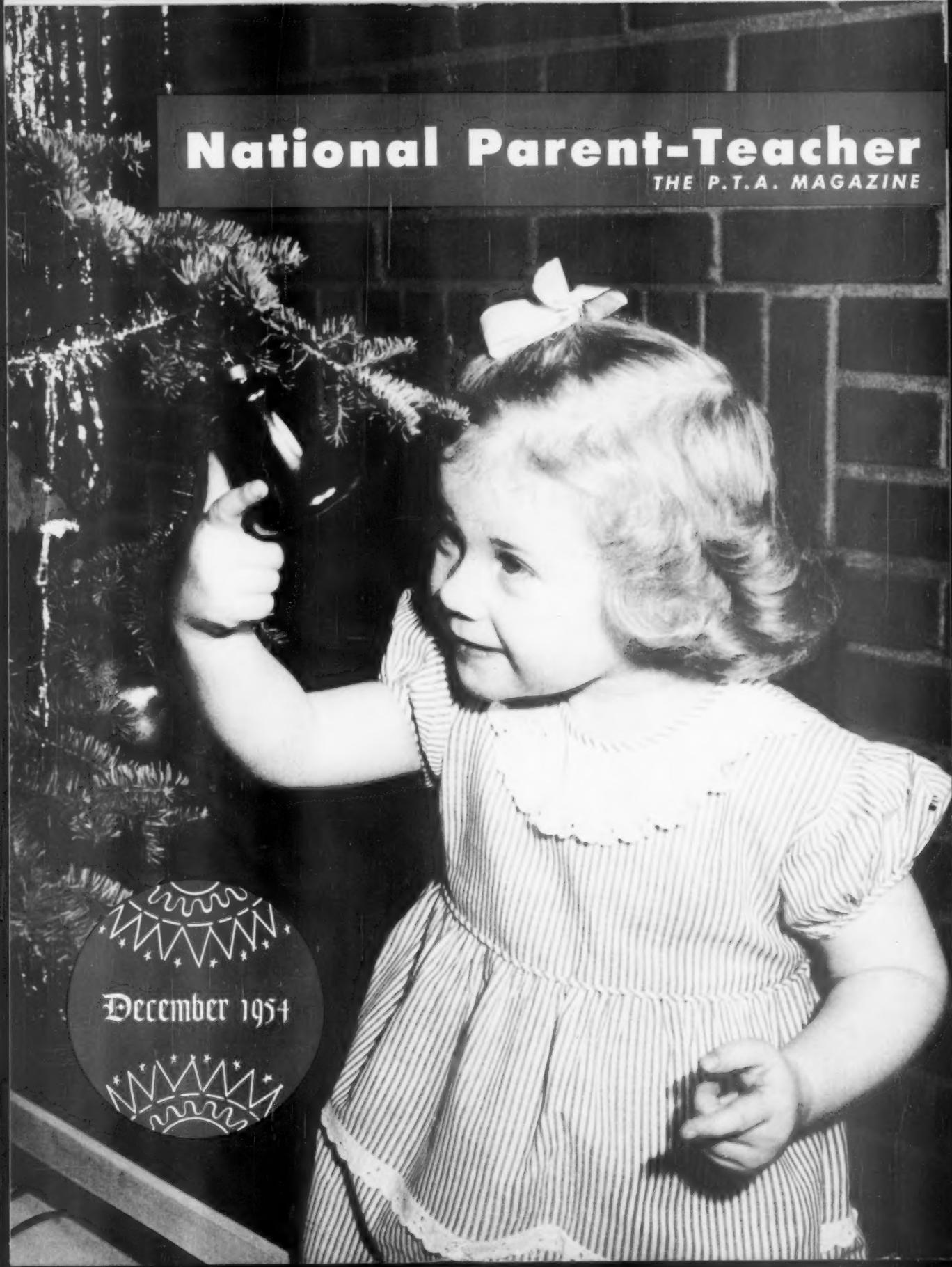


National Parent-Teacher

THE P.T.A. MAGAZINE



December 1954



Objects of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers



To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

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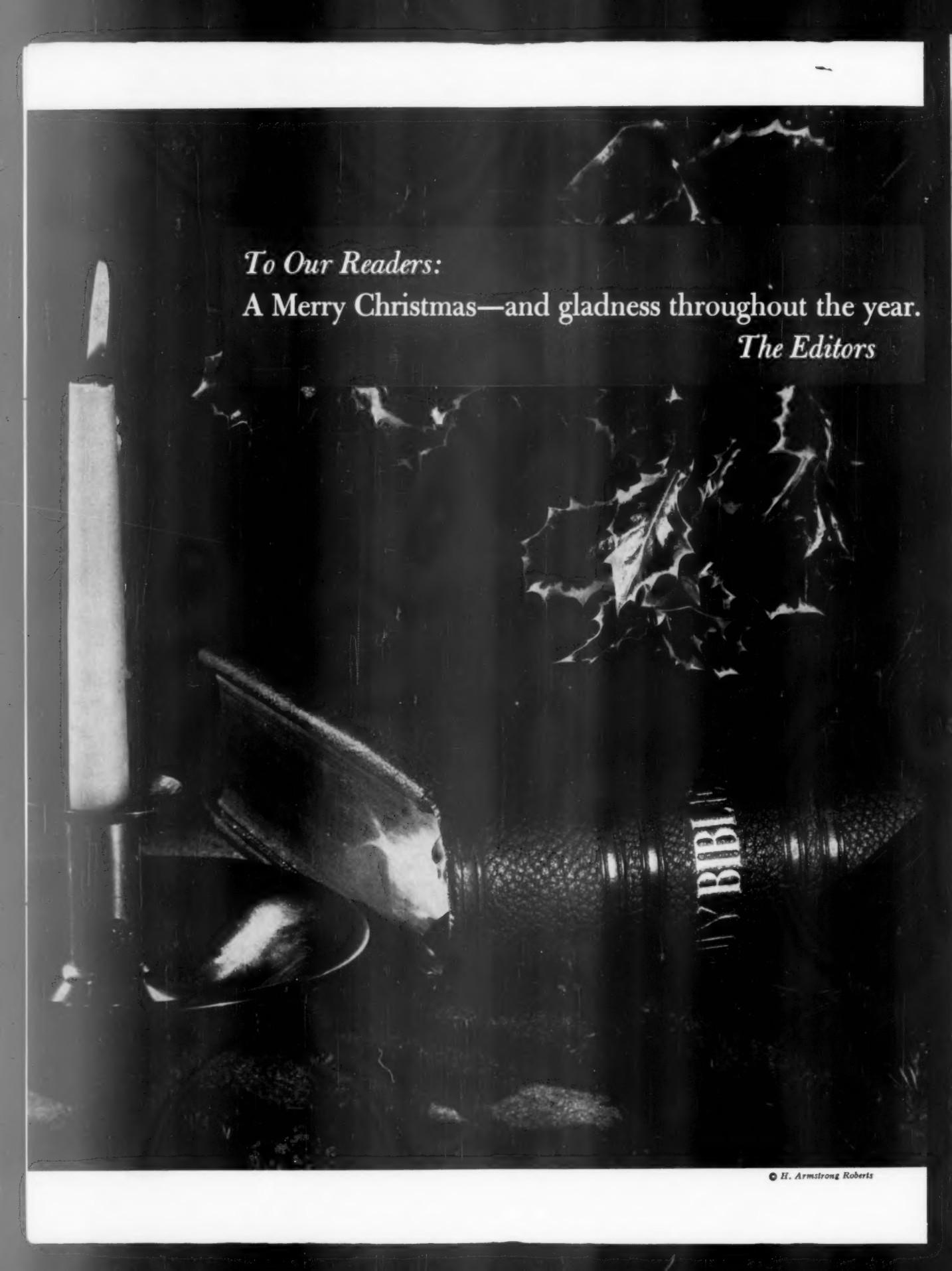
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To Our Readers:
A Merry Christmas—and gladness throughout the year.

The Editors



The President's Message

The Eternal Child

MY WARMEST memories of yuletime are bound up with children—the joyous celebrations at home when I was a child and later the festive days with my children and now with their children.

There are bright memories of holly, candles, and music—but always of children, with their laughter and their zest and their knack for fun. For me winter holidays without the fresh gaiety and the buoyant spirits of boys and girls would be bleak indeed. And I know that in thousands of other families, too, yuletide without children would rob the festival of much of its light and joy.

During this season, perhaps more than at any other time of the year, we sense the place the child has in our lives and the role he plays for mankind.

The child is a sign of hope and joy, a universal symbol of new life and new promise. This symbol is found in many religions. It appears in art and in ancient lore. The persistence of this universally recognized symbol of new life and new hope is echoed in the name it has been given: *puer eternus*, Latin for "eternal boy" or "eternal child."

CHILDREN are our tomorrow, the tomorrow of mankind. The shaping of that tomorrow is entrusted to us. We can, if we will, mold a future that will come

closer to fulfilling the hope that the eternal child symbolizes. We can, if we will, fulfill the promise of a kindlier, friendlier world that every child brings with him.

How? By encouraging in ourselves the spirit that the eternal child stands for—the spirit of hope and promise. By making our own lives spacious inns where doors stand open to welcome new life and new ways of the heart. By seeking for all children what we most want for our own—the homes, the schools, and the communities that make for a wholesome childhood and a responsible adulthood.

These ideals have long been stars in our sky. Many yuletides have found our far-scattered membership following their light. And I know that each yuletide to come will find us still taking the paths those stars shine upon.

To all our members everywhere goes my warm hope that your holidays will be bright and the days of your new year joyous, brimming with promises come to pass.

Lucille P. Leonard

President, National Congress of Parents and Teachers

Spiritual Experiences



© Vivienne Lapham

The soul's spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. JOB 32:8.

EXPERIENCES that nourish the spirit in the same way that good food nourishes the body come early in life. Some of them may be so closely allied to the growing child's physical satisfactions and development that we do not always recognize them as aids to the growth of the spirit. We must remind ourselves that science is reaffirming today what Aristotle said long ago: "The soul is the essence of the whole living body."

In infancy, if ever, there is no way to divide experience into physical, mental, or spiritual categories. We thrive on love and food together in our mother's arms, and if either one is given without the other both the body and the spirit starve.

A friend of mine learned this when she was being trained as a nurse's aide. She watched a nurse studying the chart of a very young baby, too ill to be allowed to go home when its mother was dismissed

Spiritual growth needs no heavy-handed guidance. From children we can learn how fragile are the sources of the spirit's sustenance—a tree in bloom, a bird singing in the lilac bush, the dance of wind and shadow.

Katherine Wensberg

from the obstetrical ward. Seeing the initials "T.L.C." on the chart, my friend asked what they meant.

"Those initials stand for 'tender, loving care,'" the nurse explained. "Doctors prescribe it because babies can die without it even if they get proper food and attention to all their other physical needs." My friend later asked a doctor if this could be true. He told her quite seriously that medical science now recognizes the need to nourish the spirit as well as the body of the young baby if he is to develop normally or, in some extreme cases, if he is even to survive to develop at all. He explained that most parents transmit love to the child as they handle, feed, bathe, and clothe it. So it thrives. The same baby, given the same services with no accompaniment of love, could not develop in the same way. In other words, this doctor was saying that the baby, all through its helpless days, has an experience nourishing to body and spirit as it learns "I am loved."

The type of experience necessary to the growth of a baby's spirit will not suffice for the child growing

This is the fourth article in the
1954-55 study program on the preschool child.

Start Early

out of infancy. A two-year-old discovers a completely different type of spiritual experience which may bring a feeling of delighted wonder or a sense of being released for growth. A young child may have a flash of recognition that something he has just learned about himself or life or his universe is good and true. The new insight reassures him, and the moment of discovery is exalting.

Crystal and Bird Songs

David, at eighteen months, heard a new sound one morning when his father turned him loose to run and explore in the yard. On the neighbor's porch hung those strips of dangling glass by which Orientals set the wind to making music for them. A song sparrow and a catbird, one on the clothesline and one in the lilac bush, began to vie with each other, pouring out bird songs to the accompaniment of the tinkling crystal. David sat down suddenly, lifting his face to the sun, his hands caressing the tops of the grass, his ears drinking in the morning music. There was delighted approval on his face, and for several minutes he sat there listening.

Another type of spiritual experience came to a two-year-old boy who lived next door to a nursery school. Playground equipment stood in the school yard, and during the summer much of it was left in place, since it was indestructible and firmly planted. All through the school year the little boy had spent envious mornings watching the three- and four-year-old children playing on the jungle gym. Now that school was closed, his understanding parents often took him into the play yard of the school after supper, and all three had a good time using the equipment.

Father would swing from the bars and chin himself, and Mother would swing or climb on the jungle gym with the little boy. Although he was not yet two, she never said, "You might fall." Sometimes she did say in a cheerful voice, "Hold tight" or "Look where your foot is going" or even "Be careful." And sometimes the little boy would say cheerfully to his mother, "Be careful, Mommy."

There came a day when the small climber, who had

just passed his second birthday, stood at last clear at the top of the jungle gym, proudly, securely, and comfortably. His mother and father stood below looking up at him, also proud and happy.

"Isn't it fun to be clear at the top?" called his mother. "Now show us how you come down. It's almost time for bed."

An expression of supreme delight and of discovery came over the face of her son as he looked down at her and shouted, "No! No, no, no, no, no!"

So apparent was his delight in this brand new defiance that his parents were able to share the moment with him.

"He won't come down, Daddy," laughed his mother, "and we can't reach him!"

"How's that for being two years old and going into the 'no' stage?" exclaimed the father, thoroughly enjoying a milestone in his son's development.

Perhaps it was because they had understood how he felt that the rebel was perfectly willing to be captured and carried off to bed after all three had savored the declaration of independence. All three had been uplifted by that moment. The two-year-old had accomplished something he had watched older children do. He had looked down upon his parents and his neighborhood from a height he had reached all by himself. There at the top of the jungle gym he was suddenly inspired to practice—as he must again and again in the future—the feeling of being on his own!

Spiritual experiences in childhood, as in later life, may just happen, or they may be brought about deliberately by someone of greater understanding than we—a teacher, minister, priest, rabbi, parent, or friend. They may come when we are alone, or they may be group experiences.

Tim ran to the swing under the apple tree, the low swing just right for him while he was still three. He squirmed carefully onto the seat, grasped the ropes, and called "Swing now" to his grandfather. His grandfather pulled the swing backward a little and then sent it into motion by itself. Tim happened to glance up, then tipped his head back, discovering the tree's blossom-laden branches against a brilliant blue sky. "Stop!" he cried before his grandfather could give him the expected push. He sat there gazing upward at the snowy mass that had been green when last he looked through it. Then he jumped from the swing, ran around like an excited puppy for a moment, laughing with delight as he ran. Soon he was vigorously swinging, with frequent glances up into the tree, and over and over he sang at the top of his voice, "Hi-ho! Hi-ho! Out in the garden!"

In Touch with the Unseen

Four-year-olds, almost five, sat around in a circle at nursery school watching their teacher. She held her hand in front of her mouth and blew on it. So did the children at her suggestion.

"Do you feel that?" she asked.

"Sure." "I do." "I feel it," they chorused.

"Can you see it—the little wind you blew?"

The chorus of "No!" was accompanied by laughter at the very thought.

The teacher next held out her hand so the shadow cast by a plant on the window sill fell across her palm. She asked the children to hold out their hands and find shadows to fall across them too.

"Can you see the shadow on your hand?" asked the teacher.

There was quick agreement with a trace of curiosity in the voices. What was their teacher trying to show them now?

"Can you feel the shadow?" she asked slowly.

"No." "It doesn't feel." "I can see it but I can't feel it," came the answers, this time an element of wonder creeping into the tones of the voices.

"Let's say what we have found out," suggested the teacher, and she chanted softly, "I can feel the wind, but I can't see it. I can see the shadow, but I can't feel it."



© Eva Luoma Photos

The children repeated the words slowly after her and illustrated each sentence, first by blowing on their hands and then by holding them out to the sun and the shadow.

"Other things are real but do not show, and we can't touch them," the teacher went on. "We just know they are there—things like love, for instance."

The class talked about how love could be illustrated with hands. They finally decided they would hold out their arms the way you do when you see persons you love after not seeing them for a long time.

"I can feel the wind, but I can't see it."

(Blowing on hands)

"I can see the shadow, but I can't feel it."

(Hand in shadow)

"I can't see love, I can't feel love, but I know it's there!"

(Arms held open wide)

The last words were spoken with great happiness. This group experience, like Tim's individual one, was followed by physical activity and excited play that required much running about. The next day several of the children asked eagerly to do the same thing again.

It is hard to understand fully the meaning of a child's experience of this kind. Tim's discovery was given no verbal expression beyond a cryptic song. No one will ever know what meaning the experience in the swing had for him unless he happens to remember and tell about it later. To some of the four-year-olds in the nursery school, the use of sun, shadow, wind, and thinking together may have been nothing more than a game.

Spiritual experience is intensely personal, differing as individuals differ. "The paths to God are more in number than the breathings of created beings" is an Oriental teaching of profound wisdom.

Grief and Healing

It is well to remember that a spiritual experience may be calm and quiet or stormy and violent, deeply happy or profoundly sad. Parents who share a child's emotions of wonder, awe, and humility in the face of the larger mysteries of living encourage his natural interest in the vital and the unknown and at the same time see him begin to learn the meaning of worship. Naturally we try to protect children from sad experiences or close contact with tragedy. Such insulation is not always possible, however. When the first experience with death comes along, for instance, the child's courage will be born of the courage of the adults he loves. The attitude with which they meet the situation can help him as much as spoken words. It can say to him, "This is all right. This is the way things are. Now let's try to understand why, because the reasons may not show. You have to find them."

After her first frightened sobbing, Lisbeth sensed that the death of her kitten made her mother feel sad but that it did not frighten her mother. She began to ask questions about death and to answer questions her mother asked of her.

"Lisbeth, did you ever think what would happen if no kitties or other creatures ever died?" her mother asked, one arm holding the child close.

Lisbeth answered slowly. "I s'pose there would be too many."

"There wouldn't even be enough food for them, would there?" her mother said thoughtfully.

After a moment of quiet thinking the mother went

on. "When anything is too badly hurt or too sick or too worn out from living a long, long time, it dies. Being alive would hurt too much. Right now many kitties are sick or hurt or worn out. Some of them can be made well, but some can't. Lots and lots of kitties are being born too, all over the world. Would you like another kitty to love?"

Lisbeth began to relax and to be more cheerful. Her fear and grief gave way to a beginning of understanding of the pattern of life. She could think in terms of all kittens, not just her own. She could begin to smile at the thought of countless new kittens in the world. At the same time she dimly grasped that death is a part of life and not always an enemy.

Whenever understanding comes out of an unhappy time the result is spiritual growth. This may happen when a child learns that there are adults besides one's parents who can be trusted. Then the feeling of "home" expands to include the neighborhood, where friendly and kindly grownups can help with emergencies in the absence of mother and father. The constant widening of the feeling of "home" until it includes the entire universe may be what we mean by spiritually growing up.

What is the parent's role in a young child's spiritual development? Fathers and mothers give care, love, and protection. They try to understand and share the experiences that help their children to grow in spirit. They help most, perhaps, by their example. But parents can also provide opportunities for spiritual growth. This may mean the chance to learn some thrilling new skill—the chance for full use of all the senses God gave us. It may mean a trip to a chick hatchery to give children a chance to see new life making its arrival. Or it may mean family camping, so that the out-of-doors can become "home" for the little child because his mother and father share and explore it with him.

Of course, conditions that seem to offer opportunity for religious experiences do not always produce them. And even when they do, what one child sees, another may not see. Parents are wise not to point out morals at such times, I think. Children who are led in the direction of a big idea and allowed to come upon it themselves can make it their own more readily than if it is handed to them.

Nurturing the Spirit

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." LUKE 10:21

When the author of the Book of Luke wrote these words, I wonder whether he meant that Jesus was laughing. "Rejoicing in spirit" might well mean laughter, and the adults who consider themselves so much more wise and prudent than children often deserve to be ridiculed. Our small children, with their



© H. Armstrong Roberts

keen awareness of the wonders of the heavens and the earth around them and their eagerness to learn the answers to profound questions, set us an example few adults can equal. Those men and women who have become known as the great souls of the world are the exceptions. Their search for the truth has been a life-long concern. They have never stopped doing what our five-year-olds are doing all the time, every day of their lives—trying to find out the meaning of everything within their experience!

There will be more such men and women, I believe, when parents learn to recognize and encourage early spiritual experience. We already know that it is right for children to use all their senses in finding out about their environment. We do not hear so often "Don't touch that!" "Hurry up, you've looked long enough!" Instead we can hear observing fathers and mothers say "Let's try to find out together" or parry direct questions with "Tell me what you think about it." For invitations like these help the spirit to grow. Parents thank the child for sharing his thinking with them, respecting his observations, no matter how childish they may seem. From such intelligent nurturing we may see a generation growing up with no need of an authority to quote at every moment of uncertainty, because they themselves will have confidence and spiritual strength. The world will have need of them; it always has.

Katherine Wensberg is a church school teacher, mother, grandmother, and writer of children's stories, notably *The Tuckers: Growing To Know Themselves*. This book has been highly recommended by the Library Journal as "one of the first books on the emotional life of children written for children."

Community Codes

**Here in America we hear much
of the revolt of youth as a problem.
We are accustomed to the
democratic process as a method.
Why not apply the latter to the
former and see what happens?
It has been done, and is being
done, as this article points out.**

"BUT EVERYONE else does. I don't see why I can't!" wails your teen-ager when he or she wants to do something of which you disapprove.

It may be going to some questionable spot, it may be late hours, or it may be a social affair itself that is questioned. Sometimes the conflict between the generations has to do with the clothes being worn or the smoking habit or the choice of language or even the habit of trying to study with the radio or television turned on close by.

Whatever the difference in point of view between parents and young people, this difference makes it hard for both sides to understand one another. Parents usually want to do what they can to encourage their teen-age children to have friends and to get along well with members of their own generation. At the same time they, as parents, feel responsible for the behavior of their sons and daughters.

Teen-agers, on the other hand, are greatly influenced by what the boys and girls of their own age think. As adolescents they rightly turn to their peers for standards and for acceptance. This is the time when it becomes exceedingly important for both boys and girls to conform to what they believe other young people of their age and group are doing.

One trouble that plagues us is that neither the older nor the younger generation has a clear under-

Evelyn Millis Duvall

standing of just what is the accepted and the expected thing to do.

There was a time when everyone knew the right thing to do in most situations. There were rigid standards not only of right and wrong but of correct and incorrect behavior. Men and women as well as boys and girls knew just what was expected of them. Of course not every boy or girl did what was generally expected in every instance, but at least young people knew when they were stepping beyond the bounds of accepted standards.

Not so today. In many neighborhoods what parents expect from their children varies widely. Some young people must come home early in the evening. Others may roam abroad until all hours. Some young people begin to date while they are still in junior high school, whereas others are well into senior high before they are considered old enough to go out with members of the other sex. Some thirteen-year-olds are encouraged to dress formally and go to elaborate parties; others are kept from these more sophisticated experiences until they are much older. And so it is with getting a job or traveling about or spending money or any of the multitude of experiences about which practice varies in modern communities.

This makes things hard for parents and young people alike. The teen-agers quite understandably want to do what "the other kids" are doing. But they are often not too clear as to just what it is that "the other kids" are going to do. In fear of being curtailed, and assuming that everyone else will have more freedom than they do, many boys and girls may demand privileges that actually are allowed only a few of their classmates.

Reason to the Rescue

But this confusion does not reign unchallenged. Today there is a hopeful new trend: Many parents and young people are getting together to decide just what is to be done about the situations in which

by Common Consent



© Bloom from Monkmyer

This is the fourth
article in the 1954-55
study program on
adolescence.

there is general conflict between the generations. In fact, several communities across the country have worked out codes of behavior that clearly state just what parents expect of youth (and sometimes what youth expects of parents) in various important areas of life.

Ferndale-Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, for example, developed its *Parent and Youth Code* as long ago as 1946. For two months 1,490 parents of young people in grades seven through twelve met in 129 homes to discuss desirable standards of conduct for parents and youth. The 2,260 young people discussed the same problems in their home rooms at school. These discussions resulted in (1) an attractively printed and widely distributed code and (2) an established method whereby future problems between the generations might be solved.

Early in 1953 a *Common-Sense Code* of social behavior for teen-agers was drawn up by an association of twenty-one private schools in northern New Jersey. It dealt with student drinking, parties, driving, and

parental chaperonage. This code, in the form of a guide for parents, already has received the whole-hearted cooperation of both the parents and the young people.

In February 1953 students from five senior high schools and one junior high school met together in Mobile at the Alabama Family Life Institute, under my leadership. Students and interested adults listed the problems they felt should be reviewed in their community and then recommended procedures and policies from youth's point of view. At the same time parents of children in grades seven through twelve decided on the conduct they felt they had a right to expect from youth. The two reports were pooled in joint sessions, and an ongoing committee was named to help neighborhood groups and school communities to put the agreements into effect.

In the spring of 1953 a small midwestern city found itself with a youth problem on its hands. Adults were indignantly discussing a rumored "sex club" among high school students. Young people were incensed at



© H. Armstrong Roberts

the curtailment of their freedom and at the widespread gossip about them among older members of the community. The association of ministers brought me in for a period of nine days early this fall to work with both young people and adults toward some amicable settlement of their differences. Out of a series of intensive sessions with the two thousand high school boys and girls and their parents, teachers, and interested community leaders, a parent-youth code was drawn up. It was developed by common consent around agreed-upon solutions to the problems everyone felt were most important.

How Codes Come To Be

The first stage in the development of a parent-youth code in any community is the recognition of a need for it. The particular "trigger situation" will differ from place to place and from time to time. In one community it was the question of the hours young people keep that motivated the working out of a parent-youth code. In another—Mobile, Alabama—it was the practice of even the youngest junior high school students to have elaborate formal parties, of great expense and sophistication, that mobilized parents and students alike to review the whole social life of adolescents. In a third community it was a local scandal that precipitated a scrutiny of its youth situation. In other communities still other concerns build up to a point where some common basis of understanding seems to be the solution.

The next step is to involve parents, teachers, and young people in free, frank discussions of their problems. This is usually done by having adults and youth meet separately at first, to discuss fully the problems each generation feels should be reviewed

and to suggest the recommendations that seem most feasible. Then comes the combined meeting, at which representatives of both generations review the recommendations, revise those that need further development, and plan for the distribution of the completed code.

The atmosphere in which such deliberations take place is crucial to their success. Recrimination, placing blame, and name calling—these may help clear the air, but they offer little that is constructive. Hence the leader has a twofold task. He or she must make each person quite free to "say his say," so that problems and feelings are brought into the open and so that everyone may feel he has a real chance to participate in the working out of the code. At the same time the leader must keep the group intent on the job to be done: outlining the areas where agreements are to be sought, suggesting workable proposals, working out revisions and amendments of suggestions already made, and coming to a "sense of the meeting" in one item after another.

Adventure in Cooperation

The development of a community code for parents and youth cannot be the work of any one person or of any one group of persons, if it is to be successful. It must involve all those who are affected by it. Well-meaning efforts of school administrators or of a small group of parents to dictate to the rest of the community what they feel should be done about hours, or chaperoning or drinking or any of the other problems current today, are doomed to failure in most instances.

When all interested parents and young people are involved in the process of developing a set of agreements that both generations can live with, the rewards are many. There is the immediate satisfaction of having worked out current problems together. Moreover, there is something valuable to be gained in the very process of getting together and talking over difficult areas of life. Through this experience sound precedents are established for the solution of future problems.

Such a process is built upon the mutual respect of both generations. It is the democratic way of solving problems. It is based upon the skills in problem solving that both adults and youth must learn in order to live with each other and with other people throughout their lives.

Evelyn Millis Duvall, director of the study program on adolescents, is an internationally known authority on family life and parent education. At present she and her husband, Sylvanus Milne Duvall, are on a tour of Asia and the Middle East, meeting with Christian Family Life leaders under the auspices of the International Missionary Council. We look forward to an absorbing account of their experiences.

N.P.T. quiz program



Consultants

Nancy Bayley
Muriel W. Brown
Flanders Dunbar, M.D.
Reuben Hill

William C. Menninger, M.D.
Esther E. Prevey
Ralph H. Ojemann
Lyle M. Spencer

- *My newborn son weighed six pounds, six and a half ounces at birth and was about twenty and a half inches long. Is there any way of predicting how tall a man he will be? If there is no way of telling now, at what age can his height be predicted?*

We can make several guesses about how tall your son will be, though at this age there is plenty of room for error in the guess. Let's see, however, what we can do.

In the first place, his height at birth is just a little taller than the average for boys. So you may expect him to be a little above average when he grows up. Our figures show that a boy baby at birth is, on the average, 28.6 per cent of his adult stature. If we compute 100 per cent, we can predict that as a man he will be 71.67 inches tall. That is almost six feet!

If you had told me how tall you and his father are, we could make another guess. You might try figuring this one yourself. Since the baby is a boy, multiply your own height by 1.08. Then average that figure with the father's height. If the two predictions don't agree, you may assume the correct one will probably be somewhere between them.

Now for your second question. A child's growth is related to how fast he is maturing physically. Once a boy has started his rapid adolescent growth we can predict very accurately if we have a "bone age," which is read from an X ray of his hand. Such predictions from bone age are usually pretty accurate for boys after they have passed their ninth or tenth birthdays.

But we can still predict pretty well without know-

ing the bone age if you keep a record of his height as he grows. On every birthday have him stand tall against a wall and measure to the top of his head. He may grow from two to three inches every year between three and eleven years. The average ten-year-old has reached 78 per cent of his adult height. Soon he'll slow down, and he'll practically stop growing at about twelve. At this point, if he is maturing at an average rate, he will have attained about 84 per cent of his full stature.

When he resumes growth after this period of marking time, you will be hard put to keep him in clothes that fit until he is sixteen or seventeen. By that time he will be almost through growing and will start filling out to match his height.



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Of course, all this has to do with the average boy. If your son grows fast or slow for his age, naturally the figures will differ. In this case, looking far ahead, you and his father may need to seek help about your child's particular growth problem.

—NANCY BAYLEY

California Institute of Child Welfare

● I have heard that the experiences a child has in the family have much to do with his mental health. What does this mean? I was brought up to believe that insanity was inherited. Isn't mental illness caused by some defect in the brain or nervous system? What do family experiences have to do with the problem?

Yes, the child's experiences in his family do have an influence on his mental health. Especially in infancy are these experiences of tremendous importance. As all pediatricians know well, babies who in their early days, weeks, and months are surrounded by love and attention are those most likely to grow up free of mental disturbance. (*Editor's note. See "Children's Health: Accent on Emotions" by Dr. Benjamin Spock on pages 30-32 of this issue.*) In fact babies who are deprived of this warm climate of affection are often actually retarded in their physical growth.

Physical care alone is not enough. If you haven't already read the book *The Parents' Manual* by Anna W. M. Wolf, do so. You will find in it an unusually penetrating discussion of the importance of love in the life of a child.

During the last half century we have learned much about mental illness. We still have much more to learn, however, before we know all about the conditions that produce it as well as how to cure and treat it in its various forms. And we know more about mental illness in grownups than in children, though many research workers—psychiatrists, pediatricians, child guidance specialists, and others—are constantly making new discoveries to add to our increasing store of knowledge.

Some authorities classify the causes of mental illness as physical, mental, and social. Under *physical* causes they list such things as injuries or diseases that undermine health or affect the brain or nervous system. These would constitute the defects you yourself mention. They of course are not inherited, although it is believed that a few forms of mental retardation may be. As Benjamin C. Gruenberg observes in *The Encyclopedia of Child Care and Guidance* (published recently by Doubleday), "parents who are quite normal sometimes beget children with certain types of mental deficiencies that are due to faulty development of the brain or other parts of the nervous system."

Among the *mental* causes of emotional disturb-

ances we may find memories of deeply upsetting events in the past, memories so vivid that they keep a child from reacting normally to present situations. Among causes classified as *social* are events connected with home life and personal relations within the family.

It is over these last-named disturbances that wise and watchful parents probably have the most control. Such disturbances tend to arise when a child has been under a long and severe strain. Suppose, for example, he is worried about his place in the family. Suppose he feels he is being pushed aside in favor of a brother or sister. Or suppose he feels he does not have a chance to use his talents and abilities. In that child we may see the beginnings of mental strain. When the tension continues day after day, week after week, month after month it may become so severe that a mental "breakdown" occurs.

Sometimes parents do not recognize these strains because they do not understand what needs underlie a child's behavior. Consider the youngster who is constantly craving attention and recognition, who wants to be first all the time. Parents commonly deal with such behavior by reminding him that he can't always be first or every now and then "putting him in his place." If that doesn't work, they may use disciplinary measures.

It is well known that a child who constantly craves attention and recognition often feels that he does not have an accepted place in the family circle or that his parents are neglecting him. There are other causes for this behavior, but suppose we assume that it springs from a deep sense of inadequacy. It will serve to illustrate our point.

If a child feels discriminated against, scolding won't help him to get rid of that feeling. Indeed it may make the sense of inadequacy more intense and thus increase the mental strain. The parent who scolds doesn't intend, of course, to make the tension and anxiety more severe. He just doesn't understand how the youngster feels and what it is he needs in order to lessen the strain. Yet if the strain becomes still more severe, mental illness may develop.

Parents can forestall or reduce such tensions and help the child solve his problems in a wholesome way if they know and apply the basic principles of child development. There is no substitute for parents who try to understand what a child needs and what can be expected of him at each stage in his growth. For then they can see the real meaning of the situations he faces and help him to work them out in constructive ways. In this sense family experiences do strongly affect the child's mental health. That is why it is so important for all of us to learn as much as we can about the principles of child growth and guidance.

—RALPH H. OJEMANN

*Child Welfare Research Station
State University of Iowa*

This is the fourth article in the 1954-55 study program on the school-age child.

Parents Pitch In



© Three Lions

at School

Wilbur A. Yauch

"What can we do," say the friends and allies of education, "to help meet the needs and problems of our public schools?" "Plenty," reply the advance guards, already in the field. Here an able observer brings us reconnaissance of their work as a guide in planning Operation Education.

WHEN YOU read about the dearth of qualified teachers, the shortage of classrooms, and the virulent—even vitriolic—criticisms of the school program today, you may very well ask, "But how can I help? I'm only one person. What can I do?" There are a great many things parents can do—things that many parents, in a variety of actual situations, have already done.

Where to start? Well, for one thing, teachers need much more assistance than they now get. But how can laymen assist in work that requires many years of professional training? Let's just look for a moment at the teacher's job. Not very long ago William D. Boutwell, who conducts the "What's Happening in Education?" department of this magazine, got the following plaintive question: "When are we teachers going to be given time to teach? When we are not collecting milk money we are supervising the lunchroom or the playground. We make out endless reports. Our paper work must be equal to the Army's."

Paper work is heavy indeed. Cumulative record forms, report cards, attendance records, and communications to parents—all have been greatly increased by record enrollments and a deeper conception of the importance of home-school cooperation. Teachers must also find time to plan classroom programs, locate and secure audio-visual aids, make arrangements for field trips, and take children on them. They are expected to confer with parents, to visit their pupils' homes, to make a study of each child, and to work with pupils individually. (Certainly these are desirable and necessary activities.)

Can you see now what parents can do? There is an abundance of clerical and other routine tasks that intelligent, conscientious, capable laymen can take



over, thus freeing teachers to devote a larger portion of their time to teaching children.

Before I give some actual instances of parent and P.T.A. aid to schools and teachers, let me take up a question that may be troubling you: Will your child's teacher and school welcome your help?

Perhaps your school has already cordially invited parents' assistance. If so, your part is merely to take the invitation seriously and act on it. If, however, the school takes either a neutral or negative view of your active participation (neither of which is likely in a good school), then you must work sensitively with the teacher and the school administration, both as an individual parent and as a member of the P.T.A.

First of all, as an individual parent you can demonstrate a positive attitude toward parent-teacher and home-school cooperation by complying promptly and efficiently with requests from the school—for milk or

lunch money, for signing and returning report cards, for conferences, for written permissions for various activities, and the like. This alone will lighten some routine tasks of the teacher and the administrative staff.

Second, your P.T.A. might arrange a panel, made up of the principal, several teachers, and several parents, to discuss teachers' work loads and what the P.T.A. might do to lighten them. The outcome could be the formation of a committee to list activities on which parents can help and to apportion duties among parent volunteers.

Parents Roll Up Their Sleeves

Now let me describe some of the ways that inventive and dynamically interested parents have found to help in these times of great need.

At the High Rock School, Needham, Massachusetts, parents share in the work of the school by typing regular reports to the community, preparing school museum exhibits, and arranging transportation for special events. Members of the Van Gulder School P.T.A. in Knoxville, Tennessee, supervise playgrounds at lunch periods and during recess. In Essex County, New Jersey, P.T.A. members pick up, deliver, and return loan materials from the Newark Museum for out-of-town teachers, who would be hard pressed otherwise to avail themselves of these rich teaching aids. At a number of schools parents are regularly asked to accompany groups of children on trips to museums, parks, factories, government offices, and farms. And of course the school lunch committees of many P.T.A.'s take responsibility for youngsters in the school cafeteria.

In each instance parents' aid has saved teachers' time and energy. Whether the minutes saved go into much needed relaxation, preparation of classroom programs, or work with individual pupils, children are the beneficiaries. They get better teaching.

There are important byproducts of parents' participation too. Parents who share in the supervision of children on the playground, in the lunchroom, on excursions and field trips, gain insight into what is involved in guiding the conduct of thirty or forty human dynamos—instead of their own two or three. They earn a deeper understanding of the work of the teacher and the learning of the children. When these parents are invited to share in planning the school program, they are intelligent, competent participants. Teachers learn, too, from the parents' skilled guidance and warm understanding of children's behavior.

There are other ways in which parents can help. To guide each pupil toward the full development of his potentialities, teachers try to make detailed analyses of every child. Parents can help by generously providing the kind of intimate data that only parents have. In this task of understanding the individual boy or girl, a knowledge of child growth and develop-

ment is an asset to both teacher and parent. In Denver parents, at the request of teacher Sylvia Behart, assisted in a study of developmental needs of children by observing classroom activities at scheduled times and taking notes on pupils' behavior. And of course parent education study-discussion groups are, among other important things, helping parents to be more objective and less defensive about themselves and their children. Hence they become more competent in planning with the teacher the right learning experiences for the child at home and in school.

Freeing teachers to hold these necessary teacher-parent conferences is another problem. Whenever parents can take over some of a teacher's chores, they put time in a bank account on which the teacher can draw for teacher-parent conferences. But parents are also fully capable of supervising carefully planned lessons at the time when the teacher is busy with such conferences.

There are countless possibilities. Homewood, Illinois, and Great Neck, Long Island, New York have inventoried the talent of their communities so it can be used by the schools when needed. Accountants, florists, pharmacists, clergymen; airline, railroad, and shipping personnel; men and women who know how to budget wisely, who have traveled in foreign lands, or who have a hobby like photography, cabinet making, or rock collecting—such people can and have taken over classrooms at the request of a teacher and to the delight and benefit of the children.

If you want a better school, you and your fellow citizens need to know, first, what constitutes a good school and, second, to what extent your school measures up to the ideal. Could you now answer this question: How good is your school?

If not, why not propose a study group on this subject? The Bessemer, Alabama, High School P.T.A. uses a questionnaire to find out what parents know and think about their school and its functions, and then plans programs on the basis of its findings. Michigan parent-teacher members have attended a pilot "school for parents" to increase their knowledge and understanding of current educational methods and philosophy. In Illinois and Georgia, to cite only two more instances, there are state-wide movements to encourage and guide parent-teacher-citizen groups in studying their schools.

Intelligent Interpreters

Once parent-teacher groups have clarified their own concept of what constitutes a good modern school, plans can be made to interpret the work of the local school and its program to the rest of the community. Modern education needs interpretation to the lay public, and enlightened laymen often speak more effectively to other laymen than do professional educators. Using a study guide published by the state parent-teacher congress, California P.T.A.'s, for ex-

ample, are interpreting the high school program to adult study groups.

School boards, which are the people's instrument for operating their schools, should represent the will of the people. Parents and citizens should know the personnel of their school board and the extent to which its policies foster the community's educational objectives. To accomplish this purpose, there is no substitute for attendance at school board meetings. Many P.T.A.'s have representatives who attend regularly and make reports to the membership.

Dividends from Deeds

Through your P.T.A. you can work effectively for better financial support of the schools and particularly for more adequate salaries for teachers. In communities too numerous to mention P.T.A.'s have successfully performed two missions: They have interpreted the need for school bond issues to the public and they have "got out the vote." In Fargo, North Dakota, for instance, P.T.A.'s marshaled data on the need for kindergartens, prepared and distributed fact sheets, provided speakers for meetings, and on Election Day carried out a chain system of telephone calls alerting every citizen to his duty to vote.

Teacher recruitment is another avenue that leads to the improvement of our schools. Through their own attitudes toward teachers, parents can make young people aware of the dignity and worth of teaching as a profession and attract them to it. Through their P.T.A.'s they can support parent-teacher scholarship funds to help promising students prepare for teaching, sponsor Future Teachers of America clubs in high schools, and promote legislation on teacher salaries, tenure, and retirement to make teaching a more attractive career.

Parent-teacher associations and other recognized school-community agencies, like a community educational council, have programs of organized parent cooperation that will suggest activities beyond those described here. The point is that public education needs strong, vigorous public support. Professional educators can no longer carry the entire burden. Too often our efforts to do so are interpreted as attempts to develop a "closed corporation," with the parents and general public expected to keep their noses out of "our" business. We can only tender you an invitation to make the improvement of our schools a cooperative venture. Passive interest or mere verbal support is not enough. Parents, pitch in!

*Wilbur A. Yauch, author of the well-known book *How Good Is Your School?* is head of the Department of Education at Northern Illinois State Teachers College. Not only is Dr. Yauch a persuasive advocate of closer home-school cooperation but he is a practical worker on behalf of the better schools all of us want for our children.*

What Emotional Health Looks Like

4. Saying Yes

IN HIS book *Love Is Not Enough*, Bruno Bettelheim reports the extreme reluctance of emotionally disturbed children to get up in the morning. With all their resources of mind and body they seem to fight off the daily return of consciousness, the daily need to reenter a world that has proved to be for them a place of one ego-defeat after another.

Their determined effort to stay under the blankets is not like that of the healthy, happy child who sometimes lingers and dawdles and pretends to be asleep because he is enjoying the positive snugness of his cocoon and knows that the room is going to be cold. The problem children of whom Bettelheim writes stay in bed because it is less painful to be there than to be up and around. Bed is experienced not so much as a place of positive comfort as of relative freedom from acute discomfort. By huddling under the blankets they are not merely saying a tacit no to the particular adult who is telling them to get up. Far more deeply they are saying no to life itself. They are saying no to the experiences they anticipate in the hours of consciousness that lie ahead.

In dealing with such troubled children, it does no good—in fact, it does harm—to scold and issue threats. Scoldings and threats merely confirm them in the assumption they have already made: that this is going to be just one day more in a long line of days in which nothing has gone right and everything has gone wrong.

These children need to be invited into wakefulness. They need the sort of understanding and affection that lets them dare to believe that the day will not be too hard to handle. They need assurance that

to Life

even if they make their usual quota of blunders they will not be rejected. Beyond this, they need to be given a happy preview, as it were, of activities in which they are going to have a chance to share and through which they can make themselves liked and wanted.

The necessary thing, in brief, is to help them say yes to what lies ahead and thus gradually, day after day, to help them say yes to the experience of being themselves and being alive.

Reluctance Rooted in Fear

What we see in these emotionally disturbed children is an exaggerated and habitual reluctance. Is it deliberate stubbornness? Not any more than it is deliberate stubbornness that makes a normally healthy child take slow steps toward school on a day when he



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knows he does not know his lesson—or, for that matter, that makes a normally healthy adult drag his feet toward the office on a day when he faces an interview in which he fears he will show up badly.

What distinguishes the problem person, child or adult, from the normally healthy and happy person? In the problem person reluctance has become not merely a response to a limited, specific unpleasantness but a built-in part of his character structure. The problem person anticipates failure not simply in one day's classroom recitation or one particular interview; he expects to fail, to be shown up as a failure, and to see himself as a failure in all the times and places where he has to succeed if he is to enjoy being himself.

Last month we talked of one sign of emotional well-being: a sustained power to live and move in the

world of reality rather than in a private, substitute world of fantasy. Here we approach another and closely related sign: a general readiness to go toward experience with interest and anticipation.

The two are clearly related. The individual who habitually withholds himself from experience or moves toward it warily and reluctantly cannot, in the nature of things, lend a free and active mind to the business of making himself familiar with wider and wider areas of reality. He has something else on his mind—his own sense of inadequacy and his own need to defend himself.

Each of us reports his basic attitude toward life in various languages, one of them being the language of reluctant behavior. As we learn, with psychological insight, to read this language, we become more able to help ourselves and others over the humps and bar-

What happens when hesitation becomes a habit and we hover endlessly on the fringes of things, fearful of decisive action? If we would say yes to life we must learn how to throw off this habit, to free ourselves for useful, joyous living.

riers that can make the riches of experience seem inaccessible.

The reluctances that are characteristic of an individual tell us where his self-confidence leaves off and his fear of failure begins. He may show, as we have noted above, some few or occasional reluctances within a life marked in general by a sound readiness to enter situations and try to deal with them. There is nothing much to worry about in such cases. No one of us is always big and brave; and the person who never felt any doubts whatever about his capacity to cope with experience would be intolerable.

Holding Off Hurts

The individual may, however, exhibit reluctances so deep and so pervasive that they constitute a wall between him and the normal joys and usefulnesses of human existence. We may have been baffled, for example, by a young man who has done well in school and college but who cannot seem to get himself over the hurdle into an adult job, even though his training is adequate. In each position available to him he finds some defect that he counts a sufficient reason for saying no to the offer. The salary is too low; there is no future; the work would not call for the use of his real skill; the boss is an impossible person. In the end he decides to put in another year on graduate work—and does well until he again faces the problem of taking on the sort of job for which he has supposedly been preparing.

What is wrong with such a person? We must look for an answer in the young man's pattern of reluctance. Apparently his feeling of reasonable self-confidence dwindles out at a certain point—the point where he has to make adult decisions, take on adult responsibilities, handle the interweaving relationships of life on the job, stand on his own two feet, and measure himself by the yardstick of job failure or job success. As a student in an arranged situation, with assignments and status relationships defined for him, he has made a distinguished record. But he huddles down under the blankets, so to speak, when he sees stretching out ahead of him the hazardous, interminable "day" of independent adulthood.

Or we may have worried over an adolescent girl who not only withdraws herself from all the normal interests and activities of her age group but also feels a compulsive need to belittle those who enjoy them. Or over a boy who seems perfectly healthy on week ends but develops acute indigestion on school morn-

ings. Or over a young woman who goes with one man after another but always finds a pretext for breaking off the relationship when the man begins to talk of marriage. Or over a wife who makes her husband decline the offer of a better position than he now holds because taking it would mean moving away from her home town.

We could pile instance upon instance of people who thus begin to say no to life at the point where their self-distrust outweighs their self-confidence and hope. The important thing, however, is not to multiply examples but to get hold of the principle involved—that a marked reluctance to deal with experience may express itself variously, but it has to be heard as a statement of need, a plea for help. Once we realize this, we are in a better position than before to give emotional support where it is called for, to invite the reluctant individual into wider experiences rather than to heap upon him the added burden of our contempt and coercion.

The Hesitant and the Hasty

Since we are dealing briefly here with some of the deeper complexities of our human make-up, certain cautions are in order.

For one thing, we must not assume that every hesitation and delay that marks an individual's approach to new situations is unhealthy. He may be simply taking time to get his bearings, and taking time to get those bearings is part of the business of keeping in touch with reality. So long as he seems, in general, to move toward life with interest and anticipation, we can trust that he will find his own way at his own pace.

On the other hand, we cannot assume that a tendency to rush into situations is an expression of sound emotional health. It may merely show a state of anxiety and inner tension. I recall one of Hoff's cartoons that appeared in the *New Yorker* some months ago. It showed a teacher talking with a mother who had come with her son to ask about his poor grades. "He's very quick with an answer," the teacher was saying. "But it's never the right answer." There are many people who fumble situations because they cannot wait before they speak, before they act. In their own way, they, too, say no rather than yes to life.

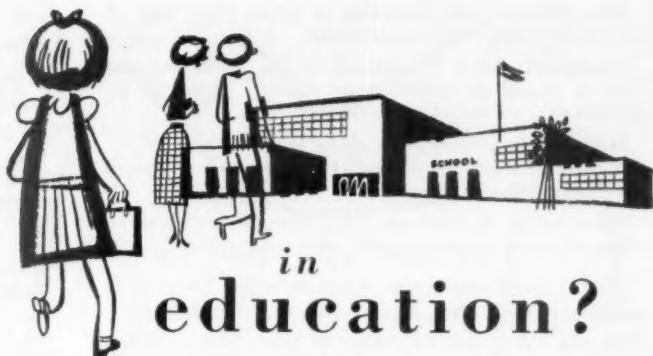
They say no by refusing their attention to the realities among which they must live and move. Only by lending ourselves to those realities can we say a happy and appropriate yes.

GREETINGS ONCE AGAIN

The 1954 UNICEF greeting cards are off the press, bringing more glimpses of children in happy moods: Korean girls dancing to the music of pipe and drum, Indonesian children gazing at a puppet show, Iranian youngsters listening to a tale of ancient Persia, Austrian boys and girls skiing over a snow-covered crest, and Mexican youngsters gathered round a candy-filled piñata. Roger Duvoisin, well-known illustrator of children's books, donated the designs for this colorful series. The cards, with or without a holiday greeting, are available from UNICEF Greeting Card Fund, United Nations, New York, at one dollar for a box of ten. Last year UNICEF cards netted one hundred thousand dollars for milk and drugs for children in almost eighty countries.



What's happening in education?



• *My oldest girl, who is in the eighth grade, is a child with a high IQ. She often finishes her assignments ahead of most of the other children. Her teacher then tells her to read or draw something until the class turns to some other subject. Well, she reads a great deal at home, and I don't see that this is the best way of challenging the abilities of a bright child.—MRS. C. H.*

As I talk with teachers I find them deeply concerned about rapid learners. A few years ago the slow learner took the spotlight of attention, but I think this is no longer true.

At one of your P.T.A. meetings, why not have a discussion, led by your principal and teachers, of the findings of a recent study—*Teaching Rapid and Slow Learners in High Schools*. This has been published by the U.S. Office of Education as Bulletin No. 5, 1954. It is available for thirty-five cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C. In it you will read what more than 850 junior and senior high schools told the authors about provisions they were making for rapid and slow learners. You will find charts showing the techniques most commonly used in English, social studies, mathematics, science, home economics, and industrial arts classes.

In English you will find these suggestions:

Encourage work on individual projects related to student and class needs.

Provide experiences in responsible group leadership.

Emphasize the reading of modern literature related to students' interests and needs.

Assign reading materials suited to each individual's reading ability.

In social studies:

Assign biographies of men and women who have made important contributions to civilization.

Use the group process by which all pupils gather and pool information to find solutions for social problems.

Encourage pupils to study individually the history of fields in which they have a special interest—art, music, medicine, and so on.

In science, students can also work "on their own": Arrange for students to become assistants for class, laboratory, or science-club work.

Urge students to plan and carry on projects of the experimental research type.

These are typical of most of the suggestions. Although this study is helpful, I think it reveals the failure of schools to come to grips with the problem of special provisions for the rapid learner. You will find that some of the methods that rank highest for rapid learners also rank high for slow learners. The Office of Education is very polite about it all, but the bulletin does expose the poverty of action on this problem, which is of such crucial importance to our society.

An example of what can be done with older students comes from Portland, Oregon. Can you imagine a group of high school boys and girls reading with pleasure and profit the works of Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Machiavelli, Montaigne, and Bacon? That is happening in Portland with a limited group of some fifteen rapid learners. Similar seminars are operating in other subjects. Teachers who expect to lead these seminars take summer courses to prepare themselves, and occasionally college professors participate.

Editor's note. You'll find stimulating ideas, too, in the book *The Gifted Child*, published by Heath for the American Association for Gifted Children and edited by Paul Witty.

• *At our Founders Day meeting we are planning not only a historical feature, commemorating the beginnings of the parent-teacher organization, but a lively panel discussion on topics of importance to present-day P.T.A.'s. What topics would you suggest?*
—D. R.

Some excellent questions will be found in the 1954 *Convention Digest* of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Here are a few:

How can we get and keep good teachers?

What can the P.T.A. do, without violating its non-partisan policy, to help in the selection of able school board members?

Does difficulty with discipline in school drive some of our teachers into other occupations?

Should promotion be uniform in our public schools? That is, should all students pass through all grades, regardless of their actual achievements?

How can we prepare high school students to meet college entrance requirements and at the same time give them a well-rounded education?

What are the high schools doing to hold the interest of children between fourteen and seventeen?

These questions arose spontaneously from buzz sessions at the national convention in Atlantic City. You might try that technique at your own meeting.

May I nominate a question found in *The Pedagogic Reporter*: "What dare we leave out of the curriculum?" Usually we talk about what we want added. This turnabout twist can stir thought.

"A dozen curriculums could be made up without ever overlapping, or even using anything we teach now," writes Eric C. Kelley. He adds:

In my own high school days teachers required that I know *Evangeline* but never mentioned *Leaves of Grass*. . . . I studied English history, could name all the kings and queens from John to George V, but heard nothing of the history of the continent, without which much of English history lacks meaning.

Did you go to school when we didn't dare leave out the skill of "bounding the states"? I did. Do you consider it a waste of time?

Professor Kelley reminds us of current omissions that may be more serious:

We have dared to leave out, in most of our schools, study of the labor movement, although Junior may have to do his homework alone because his pa has to go to a union meeting. We have dared to leave out instruction in an understanding of Communism, seemingly on the theory that not to mention Communists will make them go away.

We dare leave out nearly all learning of the contemporary world. We start 'way back at the beginning and then never reach the present before the end of the semester.

(Point of order, Professor Kelley! In many schools Friday is always current-affairs discussion day. But I concede that only in high schools offering a Problems of Democracy course do current issues receive the attention they deserve.)

What can we leave out in order to add important new subject matter? Well, we can abandon the begin-with-*Beowulf* chronological method of teaching literature. Save that for college, advises the National Council of Teachers of English.

What can be omitted without loss? Ask your teachers what they would suggest. Use their ideas to launch your panel. You will have a lively and profitable discussion.

● In our teacher-parent conferences many parents are shy about talking over their children's problems. Teachers too seem a bit reserved. How can we break down this barrier.—MRS. H. F. D.

Let me start with the description of a real situation to illustrate what can be done:

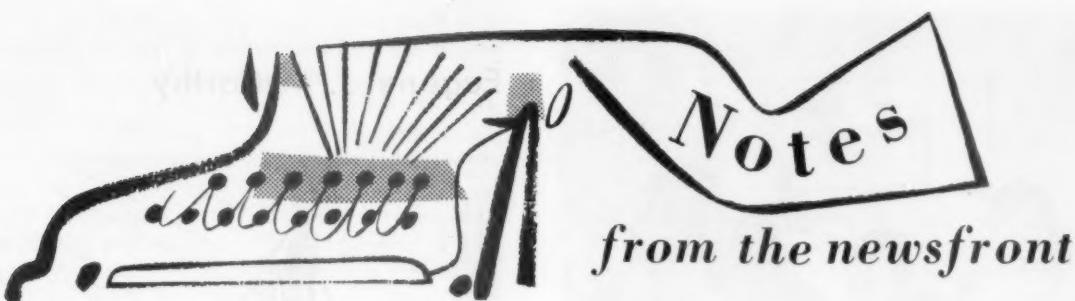
The interview was at the mother's request. When she came she was embarrassed and found it difficult to get to the point. The teacher talked along with her about Roger's schoolwork or whatever topic the mother brought up, knowing all along that none of this was what she really wanted to speak of. Finally the teacher said, directly, that she hoped the mother would speak of whatever troubled her. Then it came out. The teacher is also Roger's Sunday school teacher and the den mother in his cub scouts group. Although Roger likes her he says, "It is too much of the same thing." . . . He says the boys laugh at him because he has the same teacher for everything he does. Fortunately the teacher was an understanding one and, instead of being hurt, was able to talk over with the mother what might be done. One possibility was a change in the Sunday school class, and the teacher had been considering this anyway. The teacher raised the question of moving Roger to the next grade, since his schoolwork was . . . so easy for him and the principal had considered moving a few children on to relieve crowded conditions. The mother demurred at this "because Roger has to learn to take what there is to take" but that she felt the teacher should know about it. The teacher thought so too. She said that maybe she had . . . depended too much on him because of his being so capable, and that she would watch that.

This graphic report is one of many on how teachers and parents are working more closely together. It comes from a new book by Grace Langdon and Irving W. Stout on *Teacher-Parent Interviews* (Prentice-Hall). Other interviews touch on such familiar problems as the worries of a mother who must work, adjusting children to a half-day school session, and the youngster who suddenly falls behind in schoolwork. This book is a guide—chiefly for teachers but valuable also to parents and P.T.A. leaders—on the improvement of one of the most important areas of teacher-parent relations.

Although a parent may hold back on the discussion of history and spelling, he feels quite at home with the subject of bringing up children. So when the teacher accepts her share of responsibility for a child's development she at once becomes closer to parents. Here they are on common ground, familiar to both.

For teachers and parents to work together both need more of the light that science and experience can shed on child development. Your *National Parent-Teacher* magazine is indispensable. And of course you'll want a copy of the pamphlet *Parents and Teachers as Partners* by Eva H. Grant, which has already been reviewed in this department. It is available for forty cents from the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 700 North Rush Street, Chicago 11, Illinois. Turn also to the National Institute of Mental Health. Write for this agency's *The Teacher and Mental Health* (fifteen cents, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.).

—WILLIAM D. BOUTWELL



from the newsfront

A for Integrity.—This is the time of year when writing thank-you notes becomes a minor industry. Like all industries this one has its dilemmas. Consider the unhappy position of the little girl who labored over her thank-you note, torn between her duty to the amenities and her duty to truth. Here's what came of her struggle: "Dear Auntie, Thank you very much for the beautiful pincushion you sent me. I have always wanted a pincushion, but not very much."

Educational Bargain.—Tuition at half price—this is the attractive offer that the University of Chicago is making to combat the teacher shortage. The offer is extended to teachers who sign up for courses in education and to holders of bachelor's degrees who are preparing to teach in elementary schools.

Vitamin C for One and All.—It takes mountains of oranges to supply our breakfast tables with juice. Last year growers in one state alone shipped more than sixty-two million boxes of the golden fruit to the squeezer. That's a heap of oranges. Confronted with this intelligence, do you wonder what becomes of the mounds of leftover peels, pulp, and seeds? Not a smidgen of this nutritious mash is wasted. It's fed to livestock.

Journalism for Juniors.—London newsmen are trying their hand at a new kind of copy. They're sitting down to their typewriters to click off articles for children. Not only the reporters but also the top executives of London's two biggest dailies are giving their earnest attention to the assignment. Already the specially prepared copy is reaching young readers regularly. Only a few weeks ago each of these papers launched a weekly edition for junior subscribers. What led to this new turn in newspaper circles? One editor summed it up this way: "We think children need newspapers of their own that tell them about the world they grow up in—as well as entertaining them."

Vacations for Convicts.—Swedish prisoners get three days' leave four times a year. These brief intervals of freedom outside prison walls are credited with boosting morale.

Art in the Loop.—The air was nippy, and the urgency of pre-yuletide errands was already abroad, but still crowds on Chicago's busy State Street slowed down their brisk pace and took time to linger in front of the ten spacious windows of one of the Windy City's largest department stores. The attraction was art—a display of three hundred and fifty pieces created by young people from kindergarten through college. The exhibit, now an annual event, was unveiled during American Education Week, and for two weeks it was a colorful part of the State Street scene. The sponsoring store not only offered the young

artists its valuable space but also presented thirty art awards, including eighteen scholarships to the Junior School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Quotes in the News.—Robert Frost on poetry: "A poem begins with a lump in the throat: a homesickness or a lovesickness." The late Mahatma Ghandi on spacious living: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible."

Over the Toy Counter.—By the looks of things falsehood is in for rougher going than usual these days. The reckless adventurer who plays tiddlywinks with facts may now have to reckon with Junior and his new toy lie detector. This kiddie device has an indicator that leaves no doubt how truth is faring at the hands of any given witness. If all is going well, the indicator points to an angel with a halo. But let the witness begin to trifle with the truth and the indicator moves to an angel that is losing its halo. If the witness fails to get back on the straight and narrow the pointer swings to a devil complete with pitchfork. (This is not, incidentally, one of the less expensive toys on the market.)

An Eye for Stamps.—Machines are taking over another humdrum job, this time in the post office. The tedious chore of facing letters for the canceling machine is now done in a flash by an electric eye. Sacks of mail are emptied into a drum. As letters pour out, the electric eye scans each one for the stamp. If the eye fails to find the stamp on one side, it flips the letter over. Once the stamp is spotted the letter goes off on a conveyor belt, so positioned that the canceling machine can do its job. The device, which is to be installed in our largest post offices, is but one step toward a dream cherished by some inventors—a post office that will handle all mail automatically from the time it comes in until it's handed to the postman for delivery.

An International Beauty.—Venice is being done over, and architects across the world have an invitation to speak up if they have ideas on preserving and pointing up the beauty of this centuries-old charmer of the Adriatic. The way the city fathers see it, the loveliness of Venice belongs not only to the Venetians but to the whole wide world; hence the sweeping invitation.

Missed by a Leg.—Dicky dashed into the kitchen proudly waving a book—a prize he'd won in school. "How ever did you win it?" his mother asked. "Teacher asked how many legs an ostrich has. I said three," Dicky glowed. "But ostriches have only two legs!" his mother replied. "But I came closest," he protested. "The others said four!"



© San Diego City Schools Photo

Eugene J. McCarthy



Election-Year Lessons for Our Children

Thanks to the newspaper, radio, and TV, political campaigns have moved into the American living room. How can mothers and fathers take advantage of the shift? Can this new setting for election contests mean a new generation of well-informed, politically alert young citizens? And perhaps a rededication to good government by senior citizens?

THIS WAS an election year. When the polls closed on November 2, the voters of the United States had chosen thousands of state and local officials. They had also elected four hundred and thirty-five members of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress and one third of the ninety-six members of the United States Senate.

The last few months have been a time of intensive political activity. Candidates, their supporters, party officials, and party organizations have been busy trying to convince voters of the merits of their causes. Through newspapers, radio, and television, political discussion and political personalities have

come into the homes of America. In fact, the home rather than the public square, the street corner, or the picnic ground has become the principal arena of political controversy. Thus it is no longer possible for the citizen to avoid politics or to set it apart for special times and places. Neither is it possible any longer to isolate children and young people from politics.

It remains to be seen whether or not these changes will improve our democracy. Certainly it is desirable that citizens be politically aware. In a democratic state every citizen has political power. That power can be used well only if all citizens, or at least a

majority, are intelligent, informed men of good will. Modern techniques of communication don't play favorites. They have proved excellent tools for the demagogue and the tyrant as well as for the man of honor. The challenge is to use these tools to improve our government and to promote the common good.

Parents and teachers have a very special responsibility in the political education of children. This responsibility rests on facts we've already touched upon. First of all, in a democracy all citizens share responsibility for government. In addition, today politics can no longer be excluded from the home, nor can young people be protected from this phase of living as from a painful ill.

Just how can we carry out this responsibility for our children's political education? The question of examining issues and personalities crops up first, perhaps. Of course the conscientious adult carefully weighs candidates and issues before he casts his vote. Junior citizens, not yet qualified for full-fledged political action, are also understandably interested in political figures and political controversies. But important as it is to look into political contests and contestants with our children, it is even more important to help them develop the right attitudes toward democracy, government, and politics.

On Public Officials and Public Office

Between now and the next election year parents and teachers might well take every opportunity to lead young people away from the all too common tendency to look at politics and government cynically. Children should not be brought up to believe that holders of public office are generally venal and corrupt. It is certainly true that the conduct of some public officials in the United States has been morally irresponsible, even disgraceful. The facts in these cases should not be withheld or glossed over. But it is essential that they be presented without exaggeration and without unwarranted conclusions about *all* public officials.

Nor should our children learn to associate public service with such phrases as "pork barrel" or "feeding at the public trough." We should, indeed, discourage them from using terms of opprobrium without deliberation or distinction. Young people should not be led to look upon politics as a necessary evil, as an area in which the ordinary standards of truth and decency do not apply and need not be honored. Rather they should be brought to realize that activity in a political party is never of itself unbecoming or degrading.

Not every citizen is obliged to participate intensively in party activities at all times, but every citizen should realize the need for political parties and for party activities in democratic government. On this score the testimony of history is clear. In

America party factions preceded the adoption of the Constitution itself. Parents and teachers should educate children to understand the importance of the political party in our system of government and to realize that good government depends on good political parties.

By their example as well as by their words adults should show junior citizens that a political party is not merely a propaganda instrument or a private club or an organization that protects or provides jobs in return for party services. Rather, a political party is an organization made up of a group of citizens seeking to influence or to gain administrative direction of government in order to govern not only for the majority but for all.

In order to prevent our young people from becoming disillusioned we should help them learn that politics is a part of a real world, that political officials often make not an ideal choice but one that has been tailored to meet circumstances. These choices may well, at times, be affected by the ignorance and prejudice we hope to eliminate in the future.

On Cynicism in Citizens

Truth will prove the best antidote for cynicism, which is an especially dangerous attitude when it prevails among young people. Not only does it destroy confidence and hope, some of the most precious assets of youth, but it also eats away the will to attack difficult political problems—as it does problems in other fields.

Here, then, is another task for us between now and the next national election. Let us resolve to develop in children and young people a clearer understanding of the real meaning of democracy. Let us impress upon them the fact that democracy does not simplify our lives but rather complicates them. How? By adding the responsibility of government to our other responsibilities. By seeking to establish an order based not only upon justice but upon justice and freedom, an order not prescribed and forced upon people but determined and freely accepted by them.

And when another election year approaches let us intensify our efforts to instill in youth an understanding and respect for the purposes, institutions, and procedures of democratic government. Thus we shall reinforce the foundations upon which we in the United States have established a firm tradition of the privilege and responsibility of citizenship and public service.

Eugene J. McCarthy has just been reelected U.S. Congressman from Minnesota to the House of Representatives. This article stems from his concern about how extremes of partisan talk, which seem to be characteristic of adult life in an election year, play in upon the minds of children.



Books...The Gift

That Will Be Opened

More Than Once



Ruth Gagliardo

Chairman, Committee on Reading and Library Service, National Congress of Parents and Teachers

FAT, FUNNY figures of Santa Claus on classroom windows, carol singing, surprise gifts lovingly fashioned at home and at school, knobby packages wrapped by eager, awkward hands, surreptitious whisperings on stairs and behind doors—all these create the happy expectancy of the days before Christmas. And of course reading aloud, from both the old favorites and the new. There is the "Dulce Domum" chapter from Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*; Beatrix Potter's *Tailor of Gloucester* ("No more twist, no more twist"); Elizabeth Yates' *Under the Little Fir*; the Petershams' *Christ Child*, perfect for long looking; Ruth Sawyer's *Christmas Anna Angel*; and her exquisite Serbian folk tale, *This Is the Christmas*.

The ten-year-old who exclaimed as she excitedly opened her gifts, "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without books!" would endorse enthusiastically the slogan adopted by the Rochester, New York, Public Library for its book fair: "Give books—the gift that will be opened more than once."

Here they are, then, some of the new books. They're only a sampling, to be sure, of the rich store now available, but they're all appropriate for gifts that will be opened more than once!



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Picture Books

THE HAPPY LION by Louise Fatio. Whittlesey, 1954. \$1.95.

Roger Duvoisin illustrates his wife's delightful story of a lion who finds he is happier in his house in the zoo than on the street, where his human friends have a strange inclination to run from him (Except for the zoo keeper's son. He understands lions.)

IN THE BEGINNING by Alf Evers. Macmillan, 1954. \$2.00.

The beauty of earth and sky and the goodness of God's love are told with quiet, simple dignity. Helen Sewell's decorative illustrations make this a truly distinguished book for family sharing.

JENNY'S BIRTHDAY BOOK by Esther Averill. Harper, 1954. \$2.00.

The popular little black cat with the red scarf appears now in a larger sized book, with drawings in color as well as in black and white. There is a wonderful picnic supper in the park—and presents, of course, including a delicious blue fish. No child should miss Jenny.

PROFESSOR BULL'S UMBRELLA by William Lipkind. Viking, 1954. \$2.50.

Philip, the umbrella, sails through the pages of Lipkind's story in pictures that are alive with action and movement. Lipkind's humor is irresistible; Georges Schreiber's drawings are superb. An excellent picture book.

WISH ON THE MOON by Berta and Elmer Hader. Macmillan, 1954. \$2.50.

When Mrs. McGinty wished for a lovely spring garden, all the little animals of Willow Hill helped make her wish come true, and of course the new moon helped. Beautiful pictures by a husband-and-wife team as well loved as the McGintys in the story.

Here and Now

BLUE CANYON HORSE by Ann Nolan Clark. Viking, 1954. \$2.75.

This story of a young mare and the Indian boy who loved and cared for her is told in the same rhythmical prose that made *In My Mother's House* so distinguished. Allan Houser, an Indian artist, made the pictures. For boys in grades two to four.

CORN FARM BOY by Lois Lenski. Lippincott, 1954. \$3.00.

The dramatic cycle that is rural living today in Iowa, built around a farm boy who cannot do all he would like to do because of rheumatic fever. Rich with the love of animals, the friendliness of neighbors, and the goodness of home.

JUBILANT FOR SURE by E. H. Lansing. Crowell, 1954. \$2.50.

Jeb was a Kentucky mountain boy who liked to own all kinds of small critters, but what he wanted most in the world was a dog of his own. An appealing family story, for boys and girls of the middle grades.

RAINBOW 'ROUND THE WORLD by Elizabeth Yates. Bobbs-Merrill, 1954. \$2.50.

An eleven-year-old American lad flies around the world to see the exciting things the United Nations International Children's Fund is doing for boys and girls. This first book about UNICEF will be enjoyed by the whole family.

Far Away or Long Ago

THE GOOD-LUCK TREE by Hedvig Collin. Viking, 1954. \$2.50.

Every girl who has ever dreamed of having a little "hideout" will love this story of three inventive fourteen-year-olds who buy a plot of land near Copenhagen and build their own house.

THE FOREIGNER by Gladys Malvern. Longmans, 1954. \$2.75.

To the biblical story of Ruth the author has added background, drama, and color in a way that will delight girls especially. For grades six to nine.

HIGHLAND REBEL by Sally Watson. Holt, 1954. \$2.50.

A gallant eleven-year-old masquerades as a boy in the thrilling days when the Highlanders tried to place Bonnie Prince Charlie upon the throne. Much action and color with good historical background. For grades five to seven.

JUSTIN MORGAN HAD A HORSE by Marguerite Henry. Rand McNally, 1954. \$2.95.

A satisfying new edition, completely rewritten, of the first of Marguerite Henry's famous horse stories. The wonderful illustrations by Wesley Dennis are as right as the story itself.

THE LAND BEYOND by Ruth Adams Knight. Whittlesey, 1954. \$2.95.

A moving story of the Children's Crusade with a boy hero who turned defeat into victory. For junior high school ages.

SIDE SADDLE FOR DANDY by Nancy Faulkner. Doubleday, 1954. \$2.75.

The taming of a motherless tomboy in the days of the French and Indian wars makes an exciting story packed with adventure. For grades five to eight.

THE SOD HOUSE by Elizabeth Coatsworth. Macmillan, 1954. \$2.00.

From Germany came Ilse Traubel and her family to find freedom in Kansas just when the slavery question was being settled. An easy-reading story for grades two to four.

TANGLE-BRITCHES by Betty Peckham. Aladdin, 1954. \$2.50.

General Tom Thumb and the California gold rush play their part in this warmhearted story of a Pennsylvania Dutch boy and his family.

THE WHEEL ON THE SCHOOL by Meindert de Jong. Harper, 1954. \$2.50.

There were no storks on any of the houses in Shora, but when the six Dutch school children began to wonder why, things really happened. For grades five to eight and a splendid read-aloud book for all ages.

THE WONDERFUL WINTER by Marchette Chute. Dutton, 1954. \$3.00.

When young Sir Robin Wakefield ran away from home to London to escape his nagging aunts, he was lucky enough to be befriended by a contemporary of Shakespeare who took Robin into his home and permitted him to play small parts in the theater. A beautifully written story of a truly wonderful winter.

Fun and Fantasy

THE AMERICAN RIDDLE BOOK by Carl Withers and Sula Benet. Abelard-Schuman, 1954. \$2.75.

Here are over a thousand items of "riddling sense and nonsense" to delight young Americans, including alphabet



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riddles, Bible riddles, and foreign riddles. A good companion for Carl Withers' *Rocket in My Pocket* (Holt), a popular collection of folk rhymes.

THE GIANT by William Pène du Bois. Viking, 1954. \$2.75.

Only Du Bois could have told and illustrated with such convincing charm this story of a very young giant seven stories high, who washes his neck with a fire hose and can spank elephants!

MISS PICKERELL GOES TO THE ARCTIC by Ellen MacGregor. Whittlesey, 1954. \$2.25.

More amusing adventures of a favorite heroine of both boys and girls in the middle grades.

TOM BENN AND BLACKBEARD THE PIRATE by LeGrand. Abingdon, 1954. \$2.00.

An engaging tall tale by the author of *Cats for Kansas*. Fine for reading aloud.

THE TOUGH WINTER by Robert Lawson. Viking, 1954. \$3.00.

Georgie, Uncle Analdas, Willie Fieldmouse, and all their friends and relations are back again in a new story of Rabbit Hill. The folks are away, with an unpleasant caretaker left in charge. Phewie finally takes care of the caretaker's obnoxious dog in a way common to Phewie's kind; but it is Uncle Analdas, hero still, who brings back the folks and with them peace and happiness to the Hill.

A TREASURY OF FRENCH TALES collected by Henri Pourrat and translated by Mary Mian. Houghton, Mifflin, 1954. \$3.00.

Straight from the heart of France come these sparkling fairy tales, recently collected, to enchant old and young.

THE WONDERFUL FLIGHT TO THE MUSHROOM PLANET by Eleanor Cameron. Little, Brown, 1954. \$2.75.

A home-made spaceship carries two boys to another planet. Exciting space fiction for grades three to five.

Nature and Science

BUBO THE GREAT HORNED OWL by John and Jean George. Dutton, 1954. \$3.00.

Another fascinating story of wild life by the talented Georges. The skillful writing and stunning wash drawings make this a book to treasure.

THE CAVES OF THE GREAT HUNTERS by Hans Baumann. Pantheon, 1954. \$2.95.

Four boys and a dog actually stumble upon the Lascaux Cave, with its magnificent paintings of ice-age animals.



© Henry R. Martin

This account of the discovery will fascinate many budding scientists of junior and senior high school age.

INSECTS AND THE HOMES THEY BUILD by Dorothy Sterling. Doubleday, 1954. \$2.50.

An exciting book that will sharpen the eyes of anyone lucky enough to read it. The information is presented in lively fashion, and there are ninety-four photographs by Myron Ehrenberg.

Real People

ELIZABETH TUDOR, SOVEREIGN LADY by Marguerite Vance. Dutton, 1954. \$2.75.

An honest portrait of Elizabeth I and her times is skillfully drawn and in excellent taste by a popular biographer. For girls of junior high school age.

NICKELS AND DIMES: THE STORY OF F. W. WOOLWORTH by Nina Brown Baker. Harcourt, Brace, 1954. \$2.50.

The spectacular growth of American big business furnishes the background for Woolworth's amazing rise from

poverty to fabulous wealth. For junior high school ages.

STAR PERFORMANCE by Walter Terry. Doubleday, 1954. \$2.95.

Older girls will enjoy these biographical sketches of the world's great ballerinas, charmingly illustrated by Marta Becket.

VINCENT VAN GOGH by Elizabeth Ripley. Oxford, 1954. \$3.00.

An excellent introduction to the life and work of this famous artist. There are quotations from Van Gogh's letters with many reproductions of his work in black and white. For junior and senior high school ages.

WANDERING MINSTRELS WE: THE STORY OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN by Sigmund A. Lavine. Dodd, Mead, 1954. \$3.50.

A refreshing and thoroughly readable biography of the gifted partners whose special talents were so beautifully blended in *The Mikado*, *Pinafore*, and all the rest.

THE WHITE ROSE OF STUART by Lillian de la Torre. Nelson, 1954. \$2.50.

A romantic and faithful account of Flora MacDonald, the Scottish patriot whose attempt to aid Bonnie Prince Charlie led to her imprisonment in the Tower of London. For older girls.

Christmas Stories

THE BEST BIRTHDAY by Quail Hawkins. Doubleday, 1954. \$2.00.

A new baby, guinea pigs, a little boy suddenly forlorn on Christmas morning, a ride alone on the trolley and across San Francisco Bay in a storm—these are the ingredients of a warm, friendly story with wonderful drawings by Antonio Sotomayor.

THE DOLL IN THE WINDOW by Pamela Bianco. Oxford, 1953. \$2.00.

Little girls from four to seven will be entranced with this beautifully illustrated story of seven-year-old Victoria, who learns the joys of giving when she goes shopping for her five little sisters.

IN CLEAN HAY by Eric P. Kelly. Macmillan, 1953. \$1.25.

Maud and Miska Petersham illustrate in lovely, glowing colors the tender Polish folk tale in which children reenact a real nativity story of their own. For the whole family.

THE LONG CHRISTMAS EVE by Elizabeth Duryea. Houghton, Mifflin, 1954. \$2.00.

There is the happiest blending of American and Bavarian customs in this warm family story with its setting on Boston's Beacon Hill. A good read-aloud book.

NOEL FOR JEANNE-MARIE by Françoise. Scribner's, 1953. \$2.25.

Patapon, Jeanne-Marie's little pet sheep, had no shoes to set beside the fireplace on Christmas Eve. What happens is pictured in bright colors for the very youngest by the well-known French artist.

WHOSE BIRTHDAY IS IT? by Nancy Dingman Watson. Knopf, 1954. \$2.00.

Evening chores all finished, five children celebrate the nativity by acting out the Christmas story in the barn. Aldren A. Watson's pictures have a quiet beauty.

A Mother's Report

on Comic Books

Myrtle H. Gourley



© Bloom from Monkmeyer

The first step in fighting an evil, our author believes, is to know its nature. Subscribing to this idea, we too went to the newsstands for a supply of crime and horror comics. We too journeyed into the subworld to which these garish books have transported thousands of children. Having ourselves taken this voyage into violence we recognize the landmarks the author points out, and like her we cannot be indifferent to the exposure of children to brutality and horror, whatever their source. We urge every parent who cares about his child, every adult who cares about his community, to leaf through the crime and horror comics and see for himself the realm through which a child can wander for a dime.

A WEEK ago, as I was working on this article, my three-year-old son came into the kitchen cradling something carefully in his hands. "Mummie," he whispered solemnly, "out in the garden I found a po-o-o-r little wormie, and I'm bringing him indoors so he can sleep." It was the kind of moment when you long to hug the little rascal—worm, dirt, and all—and wish he would stay a baby always.

I looked at the comic books strewn across the table, at the welter of scribbled notes, the carefully worked out columns of percentages, and wondered. Could this child, like so many children, grow up to lie and to steal? Not if there is anything on this earth I can do to prevent it!

A short while ago I read several articles that linked comic books with the rising rate and worsening types

of juvenile delinquency. "These authors are professional men," I said to myself. "What would be the reaction of a housewife and mother who is an authority only on her own children, the goals she sets up for them, and the methods she uses to achieve these goals?" The answer was simple: "Find out." I decided to steep myself in comic books for a month and let common sense take it from there.

I visited a newsstand, explained to the dealer what I hoped to do, and asked his permission to count, examine, and make notes on the contents of his shelves. He not only gave permission but spent a considerable length of time showing me his stock, explaining his own views, and finding for me an official list of all comics published during a given month.

There were 341 comic books on his shelves, not

counting 60 to 75 classics comics. The prospect of wading through all these in the few hours I had was overwhelming. I arbitrarily eliminated those that I felt were of a better sort (about 40 per cent of his stock). These included groups of Disney-type cartoons and familiar comic-strip characters. The remainder I classified into the following groups: western, 21.7 per cent; action and crime, 12 per cent; jungle and interspace (unusual crime), 10 per cent; horror, 8 per cent; love, 3.5 per cent; combat, 2.6 per cent; and teen-age girls' stories, 1.8 per cent. There was a separate rack of classics.

I flicked through a number of these and then bought quite a few, concentrating on the crime, love, and horror comics, which after this quick appraisal seemed to be the worst offenders. I wondered whether the low percentages of love and horror comics were due to smaller deliveries or to higher sales. The dealer was unable to give exact figures but admitted that these were his best sellers.

Now I had my material, and in I plunged. Housework went by the board as I read, took notes, analyzed, and worked out tables of statistics. I found myself in a slimy swamp from which I could emerge only when I stopped asking myself "Why do they print this trash?" and substituted "What can I do about it?"

I am and always have been a great comic-strip enthusiast. The news will probably always have to wait until I have chuckled over the latest incidents in the life of Penny, the Berries, or the Smith Family. The step from comic strips to comic books is like a sudden plunge into the Arctic Ocean.

Old Friends in Comic Garb

We can, however, take it in easy stages. Let me dispose of the classics comics first. These were well-known books or children's stories. *Call of the Wild*, *Cinderella*, *Macbeth*, *Treasure Island*, and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Prairie* are examples. I bought *Tom Sawyer*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Hamlet*. My opinion is that *Hamlet* was done in good taste, but the other two, though not exactly objectionable, were in regular comic-book style, with ugly villains and sensational pictures. I do not believe that these comics would ever lead a child to read the originals. The first long descriptive passage in the book would immediately make a casualty of any youngster who had already skimmed the cream by means of a "quickie" set of pictures.

Several years ago comic books contained the same ads found in the so-called "girlie" magazines. Someone has cleaned them up considerably. Although an occasional girdle or brassière ad does creep in, the majority of the seventy-four kinds of ads that I counted were for greeting cards, clothing, coins and stamps, muscle builders, reducing aids, and various household products.



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Now let's take a look at the covers. They range from the amorous scenes on the love comics through the field of war weapons, violence, and attempted murder to the shocking nightmares on the horror magazines. These are the lures. By these the children choose what they wish to read. The titles of the stories are equally interesting. Children might read *Desirable*, *Date with Scandal*, *Easy Living*, *Good Time Girl*, or *Love in Bondage*, each emphasized by an exciting exclamation point. On the other hand, they might prefer *Murder Dream*, *Shadows on the Tomb*, *The Devil from the Deep*, *Return of the Mummies*, or *Mark of the Vampire*.

Careful checking of the stories proved even more revealing. The situations in two love comics involved extravagance, jealousy, suspicion, misrepresentation, dating on the sly, two-timing, husband-switching parties, lone girls on wild parties, and police raiding wild parties. A single jungle comic featured a hundred-foot prehistoric gorilla and dealt with murder by spear, ax, and bow and arrow; time machine experiments on human beings; death by disintegration, wild animal, or flaming lava pit. In one of these two books I counted more than fifty pictures that were objectionable because of the accentuated curves, abbreviated clothing, or attention-attracting positions of the women depicted.

The crime comics went a step further. Although the stories always ended with the equivalent of "Crime does not pay," this final flourish was usually preceded by whole series of robberies, slippings, shootings, bombings, stranglings, or poisonings, not to mention some vicious variations on the gentle art of murder.

One among the group of five crime comics that I studied deserves further mention. *I'm a Cop* had on the cover this information: "Members of the New York City Police Department helped in the preparation of this book." Of a higher class than the others, it concentrated on steps in solving crime and made heroes of the detectives. Often only one crime took place, rather than a series that tended to build up criminals as supermen who merely made a mistake.

Blood by the Bucketful

We come at last to the horror comics, which are by far the worst villains. After reading only four books, I felt literally spattered with the blood from forty-three violent deaths, twenty-five of them by murder most foul. I traveled from the comparatively mild burning, shooting, poisoning, and knifing to the end of a road where witches, vampires, skeletons, and cannibalistic women were my hideous companions. Other pleasant bits of entertainment included a starving man who ate a rat and was in turn eaten by a shark; a living man whose flesh rotted as he stood; a man who was deliberately blinded in revenge; and a mermaid who developed a taste for human flesh. Included were Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum*, a famous story of mental and physical torture, and a somewhat disguised version of *The Monkey's Paw*, which is also not exactly a fairy story.

The most nauseating book of this miserable group has earned itself special mention. Sandwiched between its disgusting stories (one of which is introduced by the words "This is your *Shiver Chef* ready with another mess of moldy morbidity from my cruddy cauldron . . .") is a full-page editorial describing the efforts of "do-gooders" to do away with comics, expressing the belief that their adverse criticisms are nonsense, and begging the little kiddies, as well as their parents, to flood the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency with letters to the effect that comics are harmless entertainment. This was

perhaps the happiest piece of information I could have received. Now I know exactly where to make known my own reactions and conclusions!

My personal opinions should be perfectly clear by now. Crime and horror comic books must be wiped out, removed forever from the reach of children. Love comics should meet the same fate. I would not have an *Exciting Love Tales* type of magazine in my house, and I certainly do not approve of having such sordid stories pictured out for small children. Off-hand, I can think of at least a hundred more satisfying subjects I would rather pour into their receptive little minds.

You and I are most likely graduates of the old-fashioned method of teaching—constant repetition, multiplication tables, unending drills on *who* and *whom*, and unison recitation of dates. Outmoded this may be, but we probably have retained a good deal of the material that was pounded into our skulls in that way. What happens when the wrong things are pounded into the youngsters' heads, day by day, comic book by comic book? Truly I hate to guess, but I know for certain that it shouldn't happen to my children—or to yours.

Myrtle H. Gourley gives five reasons for writing this article—four husky youngsters and an expected newcomer. She is chairman of her P.T.A.'s committee on study groups, and her other interests, she confesses, "include everything that flies by, especially baking, reading, dramatics, and short story writing."

OUR UNCOMICAL COMICS

LIKE most scoutmasters, I've had to put up with the comic book nuisance—boys dragging them along on every hike and camp, burying their faces in them when other things were on the program. Also like most scoutmasters, I've assumed that comic books were just a bothersome little habit boys had, offering a slightly annoying distraction to my camp program, but otherwise harmless. I had never actually bothered to read one.

Until last week's overnight hike, that is.

Casually I picked up a comic book lying on a scout's bunk. Casually I began to look it over. The shock I got was like opening a telegram to read of the accidental death of a relative—it was that sudden, that overwhelming. Spread across these cheap, gaudy pages before me was a veritable handbook of crime, violence and foulness.

This, of course, must be an exception, I thought. Surely there couldn't be others as bad as this! Quickly I toured the camp (the boys were away swimming) and picked up a dozen or so different comic books. Each new one I read was, if possible, worse than the last.

At camp fire that night we had an informal period where each boy was given two minutes to tell a joke, sing a song, or otherwise entertain the gang. Most of them chose to tell a story. One after another they got up and told so-called "ghost stories," which were nothing more or less than the *selfsame stories from the comic books I had read that afternoon!* In shocked silence I sat there and listened as these eleven- and twelve-year-olds rose to mouth stories of cannibalism and sadism and worse from their "comic" books.

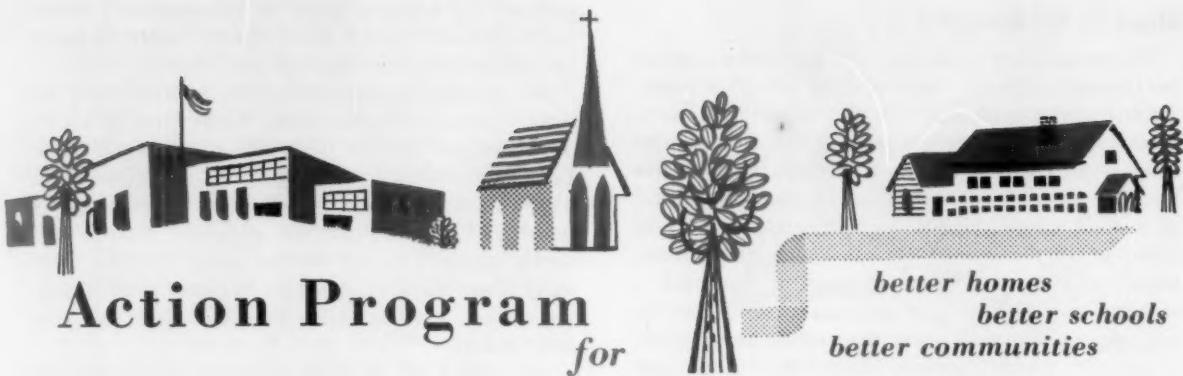
I soon stepped in and stopped it, of course, but that's not the point. The point is, there are millions of these atrocities published every month, and millions of kids are reading and being influenced by them. . . .

I'm not objecting to the traditional blood-and-thunder, cops-and-robbers routine. I'm not objecting to . . . red-blooded adventure. I'm objecting to the twisted new-style emphasis on murder, torture, and sex. I'm objecting to the callous, cynical attitude toward the law, toward society, toward life itself. . . .

Crime does not pay? In new-style comic books, I find, it often does. Happy endings? Many of them are infinitely, meaninglessly tragic. Teach a good lesson? Many are without moral of any kind. Educational? Yes, if you mean education for crime.

Suppose you agree with me. Can you do anything about it? Yes, you can.

FROM "COMIC BOOKS AIN'T COMICAL," *Scouting*, OCTOBER 1954, PAGES 17-18.



Children's Health: Accent on Emotions

Benjamin Spock, M.D.

MODERN SCIENCE has discovered ways of combating many once-dreaded diseases. Fifty or a hundred years ago, for example, we were much more conscious of typhoid fever than we are today. Members of our family would have had it; some relatives might well have died of it. But nowadays it is so rare that medical students may go through their four years of professional school without ever seeing a single case of it. This virtual disappearance of typhoid fever was accomplished by advances in our theoretical knowledge of sanitation and our practical application of this knowledge.

Diphtheria too is fast disappearing. Only a few years ago it was an immediate threat. How has it been eradicated? Again the answer is research—through preventive pediatrics, by inoculations given to children in every forward-looking community.

More familiar because it is still around is pneumonia, though this disease has lost a great deal of its deadliness. In the great majority of cases it can be treated promptly, so that—at least in children—it's hardly a threat at all. Actually today pneumonia is easier to cure than a cold. When we get to the stage where we can really cure a common cold, we'll be getting somewhere! Any parent knows that colds cause ten times as much absence from school as all other physical ills put together.

Now let's move on to some physical conditions that are more complicated—nutrition and allergy. Back in the early years of the century we thought nutrition was relatively simple. All we had to do was find out what kinds of foods people should eat and what a person of a certain age and height should weigh. Then we told parents, "This is what your child ought to eat. This is what he ought to weigh."

By this overemphasis on the physical side of nutrition I think we have created more malnutrition



© Eva Luoma Photos

problems in the last half-century than we have solved. What we succeeded in doing with our well-intentioned and well-organized public health efforts was to make the conscientious mothers and fathers of America apprehensive. The result was that they urged food on their children so vigorously that many youngsters lost their appetite. From now on, in the education of parents and children, we must bear in mind that eating is probably more an emotional than a physical matter. Neither aspect can be left out. We must not forget people's feelings about food while we teach them the scientific facts.

Allergies too, we have learned, are not purely physical in origin. We used to believe that if you just avoided the offending substance—whether it was food or pollen or horse dander in the air—or if you had inoculations regularly, you could avoid the allergy. We know now that a child can live amid horse dander or ragweed for days and weeks without an attack of allergy when life is going smoothly for him. But if he's upset or if a family crisis occurs, he may have a severe attack.

Mainstays of Mental Health

This leads us into the whole subject of emotional health in children. What are its ingredients at different ages and stages?

From birth to age one, a time of physical and emotional dependence, the baby needs a *lasting* kind of love from his parents. At this stage Baby can't go hunting for love or seek sociability. He has to wait until people feel like bringing it to him. By the time he is two or three months old he practically curls up with delight when someone sticks his head in the room. The baby's smile may start in his face, but it wiggles all the way down his spine.

Infants who spend several months in institutions where there is good care but no mothering can wither physically, become malnourished, lose interest in life. All day long they lie on their backs, not trying to sit up, not trying to do anything with their hands. They just lie there, wagging their heads from side to side. When an adult approaches, one of these babies is likely to burst into wailing tears that continue as long as the adult is there. When he goes away the infant again sinks into apathy or depression.

These children are miserable little bundles of bones. You pick them up and they are as stiff as a bunch of twigs. Extremely susceptible to disease, they can be carried away by colds, measles, and whooping cough—ills that emotionally healthy children resist fairly well.

At about a year of age the baby is suddenly in-

terested in feeling grown up and in convincing others of this. He wants to walk all day, explore everything, touch everything, try everything. He must insist that he is a separate person, and one of the first words he learns to say is "No." He uses it not only for things he doesn't want to do; he uses it for things he does want to do. He actually means "I don't want to be hurried into things by people who act as if my wishes didn't need to be consulted. I must have at least the appearance of being allowed to vote on everything that's decided around here."

This is one of the reasons why you suddenly get feeding problems in some children who up to this time have eaten everything. They begin to ask themselves, "What am I doing eating stuff I don't really like? I don't have to. All I have to do is keep my mouth shut, and she can't get anything in."

What the child needs now is love—and also tact. His parents should let him think he's deciding everything. This is fairly easy for the parent who is experienced or naturally sure-footed. The trouble is that nine tenths of us aren't naturally sure-footed, at least with our first child, and we go butting our heads against the apparent stone wall of children at this "No" stage.

We should be aware, however, that the child from one to three doesn't want more than a symbolic, skin-deep layer of independence. He's extremely dependent still, and he shows this dependence if you separate him unexpectedly from his mother even for two weeks.

The Age of Imitation

In the three- to six-year-old child we see the pattern of the person he's going to be in later life. At this age he avidly copies his parents all day long. The boy tends more and more to imitate his father and other friendly men because he realizes "I'm going to be a man when I grow up." And the girl realizes "I'm going to be a woman when I grow up. Therefore I must watch my mother very carefully."

It is this period which shows most clearly that a child is willing to do 90 per cent of the work of growing up. The big mistake we made in previous centuries was to assume that children were born barbaric and had to be forced to adapt themselves to the family they grew up in.

We have now discovered above all else that children are trying nine out of every ten minutes of every day to pattern themselves after the adults they are fond of. What we've done is to spoil the whole business by being so disagreeable about insisting that things be done our way that the children begin to wonder whether they really do want to be like us!

From six to twelve the child's emotional drive tends to be directed beyond the home. Throughout the ages we have sent our boys and girls out of the home at five or six because we have recognized that

Our entire Action Program points toward one major goal: the welfare and well-being of all children. How to assure sturdy mental and physical health in the child's earliest years was the heart of this message heard by delegates at our 1954 convention. It was brought by that well-loved and indispensable "Dr. Spock" on whose advice thousands of parents confidently rely.

their interest is turning to the outside world. The child decides to adjust to adults, to watch what other children are doing, to get along with his contemporaries. This is what he senses to be his next job, and this is the job to which he now applies himself—and not merely joyously, either. He goes at it strenuously. He notices other children's haircuts and argues with his parents against the kind he has always had. He watches what the "other kids" are wearing and then tells his mother he doesn't like the clothes she wants him to wear.

Unconsciously the six- to twelve-year-old realizes that he's got to work against his parents, to undo his previous overdevotion to them. He may find some very irritating ways of convincing himself—scratching his head, banging the table leg all through the meal, leaving the front door open in winter and the screen door open in summer, dropping his coat on the living-room floor no matter how many times his mother says, "Hang up your coat when you come in."

Circle of Influences

Here is where we see the enormous importance of teachers. We used to think that all a teacher had to do was know a certain amount of subject matter and spoon-feed it to children, keeping enough order in the classroom to make that possible. Fortunately we have found out that this isn't how children learn. They learn by watching the people they like, and if a child doesn't like his teacher, he will not be quick to learn.

Experiments have shown that a teacher can increase the tolerance and the friendliness of every one of her pupils. She can give each one some practice in responsibility that will help him in his task of growing up. Therefore we ought to be doing more about the selection of persons who will go into the teaching profession. Some people choose teaching—as some choose pediatrics—because they really want to be cross to children and make them behave. We should either keep these people away from the field or else refine the extra bossiness out of them.

There are many other people, too, who have an influence on children—doctors, dentists, nurses, ministers, policemen, and court officials. Every physician who guides a parent is influencing a child, either toward a more healthy emotional state or toward a less healthy one. Ministers and Sunday school teachers also need to understand something of the nature of childhood if they are going to present religion to children in a constructive way. And likewise police and court officials ought to know about the human beings they are dealing with.

What simple conclusion, if any, can we draw from so much complexity? Just this: We can never disentangle emotional health from physical health, nor can either be disentangled from the conditions under which families live.

A GUIDE FOR DISCUSSION

Based on "Children's Health: Accent on Emotions"

Pertinent Points

1. What are several diseases that science has now brought under control? What diseases are still to be conquered? What national organizations are supporting research on these diseases? What medical research is being carried on by your state department of health? By the United States Public Health Service?

2. How do UNICEF and WHO, agencies of the U.N., protect health? What is the total budget of each of these agencies? What percentage does the U.S. contribute? How does this compare with the costliest item in our federal budget?

3. In what ways do your public schools protect children's health? What are the responsibilities of the school health nurse? The school physician? The school dental hygienist? The school psychologist?

4. What menaces to health—physical and mental—threaten your community? What recommendations in the Action Program are directly related to physical and mental health? Which of these is your P.T.A. working to carry out this year?

5. What mental health facilities, such as clinics and guidance centers, are available in your community? How are they supported? What further facilities are needed? What can your P.T.A. do to focus public attention and public action on these needs?

6. Review what Dr. Spock says about the emotional needs of (a) infants, (b) children from one to three, (c) children from three to six, and (d) children from six to twelve. How can parents and other adults contribute to a child's mental health at each stage?

7. What special training in understanding children do police officers have in your community? The judges in your Children's Court?

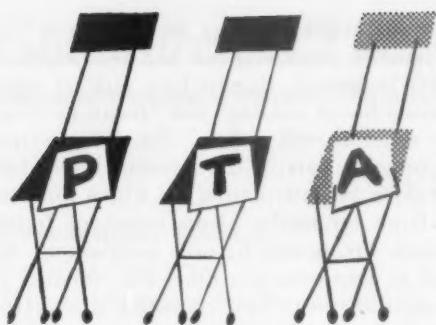
Program Suggestions

One Chicago hospital has almost fifty babies who have no homes and who for various reasons are not adoptable. These children will probably spend much of their lives in institutions. Find out from hospital superintendents in your city where there are young children who have no one to visit them or give them the affection they need. Discuss the possibility of having your members schedule regular visits to these children.

Dr. Spock points out that boys need in their lives some man whom they admire and want to imitate. For one reason or another some boys are deprived of an acceptable pattern of masculinity. Use the brainstorming technique to get suggestions for providing fatherless boys in your neighborhood with the companionship of congenial men.

Many physical ills can be traced to mental or emotional disorders. Invite your school physician or another doctor to talk to your group on the link between physical and emotional ailments, especially the effect of the latter on hearing, sight, teeth, skin, breathing, digestion, and other functions and organs of the body. Follow this with a panel discussion of the book *Your Child's Mind and Body: A Practical Guide for Parents* by Flanders Dunbar, M.D., or *The Battle for Mental Health* by James Clark Moloney, M.D.

Invite a staff member of the U.S. Public Health Service or of your local public health department to describe government-supported research projects to control disease.



projects and activities

The Principal and the P.T.A.

OF THE many roles a school principal can play in his P.T.A., the most exciting and rewarding is a cooperative leadership role with the elected leaders of the group. It is logical, isn't it, that the principal as an educator should be one of the leaders of an organization with educational objectives? The parent membership in the P.T.A. changes as the children go on to another school, but the principal—for better or worse—usually remains in his post a number of years. The opportunity to give continuity to the fine lay leadership in his school, to encourage it, and to help develop it is one no principal should miss.

An exciting and worth-while parent-teacher program is the outcome of principal-P.T.A. cooperation. This has been our experience at Ramsey Junior High School in Minneapolis, where the principal, capable officers, and a large membership of helpful parents and teachers willingly work together and eagerly accept each other's good ideas.

What ideas have helped to make our P.T.A. the largest in the state? (We have more than seventeen hundred members, who show their enthusiasm by unusually high attendance at meetings.) Let me talk about some of the ideas—devices, we might call them—that have worked at Ramsey. Few, if any, are original, but here they are. They may help you too, whether you are a principal-, parent-, or teacher-member of the P.T.A.

First Things First: Membership and Magazine

Realizing that adolescents are not the most reliable of mail carriers, we use the regular U.S. mail and first-class postage to make sure that every home receives the initial P.T.A. mailing—that all-important invitation to membership. Further, we ask every student to return a tear sheet signed by his parent. The signature indicates that the parent has considered the request for P.T.A. membership. Every parent, of course, is free to join or not to join, but the bright membership leaflets enclosed in the mailing attract a large number. And with such a high level of parent participation, what does the school

staff do? It joins—and it joins almost 100 per cent.

A subscription blank for the *National Parent-Teacher* is included in the "call-to-membership" mailing. Every year this effort alone brings forth scores of new subscribers. Encouraging subscriptions to the *National Parent-Teacher* is a great service to mothers and fathers of a school community.

Purpose + Participation = Good Programming

We discovered long ago that there are better, more stimulating, and more enlightening ways to present programs than by having conventional speakers. One way is the "open house," at which every parent follows his child's school program for ten-minute class periods. Our open house is not a time for teacher-parent conferences but rather an occasion for the parents to meet their children's teachers and to hear them explain the objectives or methods of each course. It is a good time to have textbooks on each desk for parents to examine.

One year at the opening fall meeting the school staff interpreted the educational program. Forty staff members joined in presenting twenty-two simultaneous meetings twice during the evening. All the school specialists, among others, talked on their particular fields. The topics they discussed included "Why Teach Remedial Reading?" "Are We Teaching the American Heritage?" "What Skills Are Taught in English Class?" "What Makes a Happy, Well-adjusted Child?" Typical of the parents' reaction is the following:

We enjoyed the program so thoroughly that it seemed only appropriate to drop you a note. . . . We managed to take in four sessions between us and would like to take in at least four more some time. There is no doubt that the Ramsey P.T.A. is assisting many parents in this area in interpreting and understanding the responsibilities of parenthood.

Another popular P.T.A. meeting is "Student Participation Night," presented in the auditorium. This program also interprets the school to the parent, but through the young people themselves. Ramsey's most recent demonstration of student activities in-

cluded a U.N. skit, folk dancing, and performances by the school orchestra, choral group, choir, and a leadership class.

Another of our programs involving students is a parent-teacher-student panel presenting different points of view on a pertinent subject—perhaps their reactions to a film or some other visual presentation of a matter of common concern or interest.

Teacher-wise

School personnel and students, we believe, should assume real responsibilities in helping to achieve P.T.A. objectives. Each of them has a particular contribution to make to the P.T.A. program. As you can see, they take an active part in our P.T.A. Two teachers serve as faculty representatives on the P.T.A. board. Once or twice a year faculty members are asked by the P.T.A. social committee to act as co-hosts at the refreshment hour following the general meeting. Our teachers like to be asked to carry specific responsibilities for P.T.A. events.

The board, incidentally, is very generous in expressing its appreciation to the teacher representatives each year. Every two or three years the parents on the board give an evening dinner off the school grounds for the whole Ramsey faculty. The dinner, with just a fun and fellowship emphasis, is the parents' way of saying a sincere "Thank you" to the teachers.

Our monthly board meetings, for which two parents each month provide coffee and cookies, have become very important. Parents have said, "I never want to miss a board meeting" and "Board meetings are worth while as well as fun." For the principal the most valuable part of the meeting is the half hour he is given for interpreting the school program or just talking informally about recent or future school events. Frequently he asks members of the school staff to take over this time. For instance, at a recent meeting the school counselor interpreted Ramsey students' scores on the Iowa tests and explained the school's evaluation program. Board members like getting "inside news" about their school through these explanations.

Less concrete than the preceding points but of basic importance is the philosophy behind our P.T.A. program organizing. We believe that the P.T.A. has two unique purposes: (1) to interpret the school program to parents and (2) to help the parents do a more effective job as mothers and fathers. At Ramsey we believe the principal and the P.T.A. officers have an obligation to pursue these two objectives every time parents are brought into the schoolhouse under the aegis of the P.T.A.

—RUSSELL D. BRACKETT

Principal

Ramsey Junior High School
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Guidance As They Grow

STUDY-DISCUSSION PROGRAMS

I. PRESCHOOL COURSE

Directed by Ruth Strang

"Spiritual Experiences Start Early" (page 4)

Points for Study and Discussion

1. What are the earliest spiritual experiences a child has? How does the mother provide her baby with these experiences during his first two years of life?

2. Katherine Wensberg, in her article, mentions the exaltation of one child who suddenly sees bright blue sky through apple blossoms, the delight of another child in his newly gained skill and independence. What are some of the spiritual experiences you have observed in preschool children you have known?

3. A four-year-old group in a church school had been talking about many things that they could not explain—the color of butterflies' wings, little seeds that became plants and trees, the night sky, and many others. They expressed their feelings in a song. Each verse, illustrated by pictures they had drawn, was about one of these things that they could not explain. Each verse ended in the same refrain: "We can only watch and wonder." Why is this attitude toward "the unknowable"—toward spiritual realities—a good one to encourage in little children? Does it conflict with the modern scientific attitude? Do you know of any eminent scientists who have admitted that there are some things for which they have no explanation? Do they not, too, say simply, "In the beginning, God"?

4. Francis Thompson wrote the following lines:

*The angels keep their ancient places;
Turn but a stone, and start a wing.
'Tis ye with your estranged faces
That miss the many-splendored thing.*

What is the poet saying about the spiritual experiences of children? What does he say about their awareness of the wonder of the world all about them? What is he saying about grownups who have lost this sense of the unseen and no longer are aware of the wonder of the earth? What effect might such adults have on little children to whom the unseen is still real?

5. In her article Mrs. Wensberg says that "death is a part of life." Suppose a loved person in the family circle has died. Which of the following would be the best ways of handling the situation with a child four or five years old? Discuss each suggestion.

- Sending the child to stay with a neighbor or relative until the funeral is over.
- Keeping the child at home but not talking about the death when he is present.
- Telling the child that the loved person has just gone away on a long, long journey.
- Sharing your own feelings of grief with the child.
- Helping the child to begin to understand the reasons for death and to think of birth and death as part of the pattern of living.
- Directing the child's attention to other persons and pets he can love.

6. What church experiences might have an uplifting spiritual value for the preschool child—listening to the choir and organ music, seeing the sunlight through stained-glass windows, sharing a common experience with the whole family, gaining a sense of a real but unseen presence? Are there some church experiences which might have the opposite effect on preschool children, such as having to sit still too long or hearing religious concepts that are too difficult for them to understand? What would be the best practice with respect to the preschool child's church or Sunday school attendance? Describe what you would consider an ideal Sunday school period for a child four to six years old.

Program Suggestions

- A group of members might volunteer to read the article very carefully and then present the main ideas in graphic or dramatic form. For example, they could prepare an effective series of posters, perhaps using colored pictures from magazines. One poster, showing a mother fondling her baby, could read "Babies Need T.L.C." Another, headed "Capture Moments of Discovery and Delight," could picture a child listening to the song of a bird or enjoying some other aspect of nature.
- Divide the members into several small groups. Each group prepares a number of vivid illustrations of an important point made in the article. For example, one group could give examples of "spiritual experiences that just happen." Another could tell of spiritual experiences "brought about deliberately by an understanding person."
- Three or four members might read some of the books and pamphlets suggested under "References" and report the best, most concrete, and most helpful ideas to the rest of the group.
- Invite an especially gifted church school or nursery school teacher to tell about the kinds of spiritual experiences she tries to provide for the children in her charge. Follow this talk with comments, questions, and discussion from the group as a whole.

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II. SCHOOL-AGE COURSE

Directed by Bess Goodykoontz

"Parents Pitch In at School" (page 13)

Points for Study and Discussion

1. Many of us can remember the time (not too far back) when parents came to school only as visitors, not as helpers. Now we are going through a revolutionary change. Parents are being urged to join hands with the school staff in doing many things that only teachers used to do. Which of the following factors do you think may be responsible for the change?

- Very large classes.
- Crowded curriculums.
- Many extracurricular activities.
- The high level of education of today's parents.
- The parent education movement.
- The desire to give children enriched programs.

Are there any other factors that might have produced the change?

2. Try listing the different kinds of activities and responsibilities that make up a teacher's day. Possibly a study of these has been made in your school. Such studies usually show, in addition to teaching, responsibilities that can be classified as secretarial, custodial, social, financial, and so on. Discuss each responsibility, deciding whether it is one that (a) only a teacher can handle; (b) parents can share; and (c) parents now are helping to carry on in your school.

3. The author of this article has listed many ways in which parents are helping in other communities. Are there some that (a) are now going on in your school; (b) might well go on in your school; or (c) you would question as being desirable for your school? If there are any that you do question, give your reasons.

4. Some parents can't go to school to help out. What suggestions does Dr. Yauch give for ways of helping while staying at home?

5. Has your parent-teacher association, working alone or with other community groups, made a study to determine how good your school is, as the author suggests? If so, you may wish to review the part parents took in making the study—how many of them helped, what they did, how long they worked, and so forth.

6. Dr. Yauch proposes that parents, either as individuals or as representatives of the P.T.A., attend school board meetings. In what ways can, or does, such a practice help to improve the schools? There probably is no more difficult, time-consuming, and sometimes even unpopular civic

service than serving on a board of education. Does your board need more public support?

Program Suggestions

• If a fairly large attendance is expected at this meeting, it might be interesting to start with a skit called "When Do I Teach?" or "Help Wanted!" or some such title. It need not be elaborate, but it could show a teacher trying valiantly to get to the geography lesson, with a visitor arriving, a message coming from the office, the school nurse coming for inspection, the loudspeaker announcing the total amount collected for the Red Cross, and the bell ringing for air-raid drill. The point is not that any of these is unimportant but that the teacher has a tremendous management job in addition to professional teaching responsibilities.

Following this, the leader may say to the group: "Now I know each of you would like to help your child's teacher as much as possible. Some of the teachers in your school have arranged several jobs for you to do in the next hour so you can find out what kinds of help are needed." The jobs could include (1) preparing a series of measuring problems, to give experience in using measures of (a) time, (b) distance, (c) weight, and (d) size; (2) clipping and mounting reference articles from current magazines; (3) verifying and recording test scores; and (4) repairing library books.

If there is time, the group might reassemble, so that members may discuss what they have accomplished.

• Some schools make an inventory each year of the services parents are willing to give. A letter and a check sheet must be prepared and distributed, and the replies tabulated and summarized for teachers' use. Your study-discussion group might volunteer to do this job. Suggestions for the inventory may be found in an article by Helen Halter Long, "Eighty-three Parents Are on Our Staff," published in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the *National Elementary Principal* (September 1945, pages 120-26).

• If there is reason to think that people do not understand the need for parents' help at school, a film (such as the N.E.A.'s *Skippy and the Three R's*) could be shown as a basis for discussing the question "Exactly what could a helping parent do in this kind of classroom?"

• It may be that in your school you are far beyond this point and are eager to tackle some more ambitious project. Try one of these:

1. Planning and providing a program of activities for gifted children. Teachers who have thirty-five or forty children in a class can rarely provide as much additional guidance and opportunities as would profit the gifted pupil.

2. Providing Saturday programs for children. These can include all those activities for which there is incentive but never enough time at school, such as art, music, games, crafts, and so on. They can include other activities, too—for instance, instrumental music, learning a foreign language, or ceramics.

3. Preparing an index of films, filmstrips, and slides, correlated with the curriculum of each class.

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Review the articles in the 1953-54 series "Action Program for Better Homes, Better Schools, and Better Communities," especially "Teamwork for Better Communities" by Harleigh B. Trecker (January 1954, pages 30-32) and "Keeping the Community Mind Alive" by Harry A. Overstreet (April 1954, pages 25-27).

Another helpful series is "P.T.A. Projects and Activities." See, for example, "Dad's Hobby Night" by Shirley E. Pollock (October 1951, pages 32-33); "Health Campaign on the Cumberland" by Perry Leah Roberts (October 1952, pages 28-29); "Phoenix Tests Its Children's Hearing" by Carmen C. Dixon (April 1953, pages 29-30); and "People Against Polio" by Fanny M. Nelson (September 1953, pages 34-36).

III. COURSE ON ADOLESCENCE

Directed by Evelyn Millis Duvall

"Community Codes by Common Consent" (page 8)

Points for Study and Discussion

1. The seniors in your high school are talking about staying out all night after their senior prom. Several of the fathers and mothers of the seniors feel that this would not be wise. The school authorities say that there is little they can do to see that the young people go home as soon as the prom is over. Are there some suggestions in the process of developing a community parent-youth code that might be useful in working out this senior prom problem? Who should be consulted? Who should be invited to the meeting called to discuss the senior prom plans? Who should act as chairman? What points should be discussed?

2. Certain mothers and fathers are concerned because their teen-agers are being served "spiked punch" at parties given in private homes. The boys and girls say that it's hard to refuse the refreshments served by their friends' parents without being rude. The parents who disapprove hesitate to talk with these sophisticated adults, who serve alcoholic drinks to teen-agers, for fear of creating "neighborhood feeling." Are there possibilities for a group discussion of such a problem without putting individuals "on the spot"? What steps might be taken, following the process of developing community codes described in the article?

3. Some of the high school crowd in a near-by community have begun to frequent a questionable night spot down the highway. This place has been "out of bounds" to the young people in your community. But recently your daughter and her "steady," a nice boy whom you trust, made quite a fuss because you disapproved of their meeting a couple from the other town at that particular spot. You feel you were justified in taking the stand you did, but there is still a wall of coolness between you and your daughter. You suspect that many other parents and young people in your part of town feel as you do about the question. Is there some way that you can clear the air by putting the problem up for open discussion?

4. According to the author, it is important that all interested persons of both generations be in on discussions of what behavior is to be expected in specific situations.

Do you know of some circumstances when a set of rules was superimposed upon a group of young people—or adults? What happened? What are the reasons why solutions are more likely to work out comfortably when they are developed jointly by all persons concerned?

Program Suggestions

- The article suggests that the particular problems between parents and adolescent young people differ from time to time and from place to place. In order to get at some of the "hot spot" issues between the adults and the young people in your community, you might organize a panel of mothers, fathers, and high school students to discuss the question "What We Should Agree Upon" or "What Should Parents and Young People Expect of Each Other?"

Experience with such discussions indicates that they work out best when panel members are chosen from among adults and young people who are not afraid to speak their minds easily and freely. The panel should be large enough to represent the various ages and points of view but not so large that it is difficult to lead. Six to eight members usually works well. The leader should be someone both generations respect and trust. Toward the latter part of the meeting, the discussion should be thrown open for further questions, comments, and elaborations.

- The American Theatre Wing play by Nora Stirling, *High Pressure Area*, available from the National Association for Mental Health, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, New York, presents a provocative situation between an adolescent girl and her parents. This situation offers possibilities for a discussion on the way in which a neighborhood code might help prevent or alleviate problems like the one in the play.

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Motion

picture

previews

PREVIEW EDITOR, ENTERTAINMENT FILMS MRS. LOUIS L. BUCKLIN

JUNIOR MATINEE

From 8 to 12 years

The Black Shield of Falworth—Universal-International. Direction, Rudy Mate. Athletic Tony Curtis, in the doublet and hose or the shining armor of the Middle Ages, jousts and bounces his way through a colorful, unpretentious melodrama in Cinemascope. As a hotheaded farm boy, who is sent to be trained as a squire at a local castle, Tony has lots of opportunities to show his prowess with sword and lance. Naturally he falls in love with pretty Janet Leigh, the daughter of the house, but since he turns out to be a lord after all, this only adds



The young armor-clad hero of **The Black Shield of Falworth** (Tony Curtis) kneels to accept his knighthood.

to the enjoyment of the film. Simple and well-photographed settings of a Norman castle, lively scenes of the training of squires and knights, beautifully gowned ladies, and lots of action make for a pleasingly old-fashioned tale of intrigue and derring-do. Leading players: Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh, Herbert Marshall, David Farrar.

Family 12-15 8-12
Good fun Yes Good

The Bob Mathias Story—Allied Artists. Direction, Francis D. Lyon. A straightforward and appealing film biography of one of the world's finest athletes, agreeably and unassumingly acted by the star himself and his charming wife, Melba. It was in the 1952 Olympic games at Helsinki that Bob made sports history by winning the decathlon for the second consecutive year. The picture covers the grueling period of training, the qualifying competitions, and the final contests, as well as scenes of the young hero's life at home. The skillful inclusion of actual newsreel clips taken at the London and Helsinki games adds to the dramatic quality of a fine little film. Leading players: Bob and Melba Mathias.

Family 12-15 8-12
Refreshing Excellent Excellent

Roogie's Bump—Republic. Direction, Harold Young. Every small baseball fan has daydreamed himself into a star role in a big league. Roogie, aged nine, doesn't exactly dream it, but after he is left off the neighborhood team a kindhearted ghost—Red O'Malley, greatest pitcher of all time—suddenly appears and causes a mysterious bump to develop on Roogie's pitching arm. The boy throws a ball across the river and knocks down a chimney. Then when he and his grandmother get tickets for a game at Ebbets Field, he returns a foul ball that lifts Roy Campanella off his feet. This is only the beginning of the heady magic. The picture makes some sensible comments on the unwholesome aspects of publicity build-ups. It also underscores the point that the best baseball teams do not depend on freakish strokes of luck but on cooperation and the will to win. A pleasantly disarming little film, if occasionally amateurish. Leading players: Robert Marriot, Ruth Warrick, Olive Blakeney, the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Family 12-15 8-12
Diverting Yes Good

Three Ring Circus—Paramount. Direction, Joseph Pevney. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis find a perfect background for their zany antics in a warm and sentimental tale about the circus. Jerry, his heart set on being a clown, is willing to work at anything from lion taming to being shot out of a cannon for a chance to appear in a center ring. Meanwhile Dean's good looks and easy way with a song have captivated not only the lady owner of the circus, but also a temperamental blonde aerialist (Zsa Zsa Gabor). Jerry's wistful appeal is ideally suited to the role of clown, and Dean seems more than willing to let him have the spotlight. The new Vista Vision and Technicolor do handsomely by the big top, with its wide-eyed crowds, scarlet-coated ringmaster, lumbering elephants, and gaudy midway. Leading players: Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Zsa Zsa Gabor.

Family 12-15 8-12
Good holiday fare Good Good

FAMILY

Suitable for children if accompanied by adults

Quest for a Lost City—RKO. Produced by Dorothy Howell. Armchair adventurers will marvel over this fantastically venturesome film log of the journey of Dana and Ginger Lamb into the jungles of the Mexican-Guatemalan border, seeking the ruins of an ancient Mayan city. The penniless couple start their wanderings on foot down the Mexican coast. They pick up a jalopy for ten dollars, drive it until it stops, then have it pulled by oxen until it literally falls apart. They find an abandoned plane, re-service it with parts from other wrecks, and continue their trip over uncharted territory. Young scouts will be particularly fascinated by the Lambs' achievements in the way of simple survival—finding water where there is none, combating floods, making soap and rubber, and so on. The narration tells too much of the story, with the result that certain scenes sometimes seem to be mere illustrations. Nevertheless this is an unusual and interesting documentary, forerunner of a type of picture that, though possibly amateurish, may set us on the paths of true adventure instead of the synthetic, violence-ridden patterns of fictional melodramas.

Family 12-15 8-12
Good Good Yes

Sitting Bull—United Artists. Direction, Sidney Salkow. This cavalry-and-Indian western strives for impressiveness through Cinemascope and for importance through sympathetic treatment of the Indians. However, the plot, based on the story of

Sitting Bull and Custer's Last Stand, is confused. The characterizations, with the exception of J. Carroll Naish's dignified portrayal of Sitting Bull, are routine and the dialogue and scenery mediocre. A young cavalry officer, concerned over the unfair treatment of the Sioux, succeeds in arranging a meeting between Sitting Bull and President Grant—but not, the story states, before a great deal of blood has been spilled through General Custer's willful stupidity. Leading players: J. Carroll Naish, Dale Robertson.

<i>Family</i>	12-15	8-12
<i>Mediocre</i>	<i>Mediocre</i>	<i>Mediocre</i>

So This Is Paris—Universal-International. Direction, Richard Quine. A lighthearted, energetic musical in Technicolor cheerfully keeps up the traditional belief that when American sailors are on leave anywhere in the world they are interested in only one thing—girls! Brash Tony Curtis is the ringleader of a trio of gobs let loose in Paris. Before the end of the picture he has arranged the future not only of a beautiful American singer but of six war orphans in her charge. As the quiet member of the threesome, Gene Nelson sings and dances appealingly, while Paul Gilbert spares no effort in his role as funny man. Except for a few conventional shots of Paris the backgrounds are synthetic, but the picture itself is lively, tuneful entertainment. Leading players: Tony Curtis, Gloria de Haven, Gene Nelson, Paul Gilbert.

<i>Family</i>	12-15	8-12
<i>Entertaining</i>	<i>Entertaining</i>	<i>Entertaining</i>

They Rode West—Columbia. Direction, Phil Karlson. The ugly old saying, "Only a dead Indian is a good Indian," seems to be laid to rest in this earnest little western. Its climax reveals a white doctor operating upon a chief's son to save his life while warlike Indians and belligerent whites wait tensely for the outcome. Our hero, a new army surgeon, puts the needs of humanity above the commands of the military—to the anger of a calloused captain, whose hotheaded reactions bring on the plot, and to the approval of a colonel, whose benevolence sanctions the happy ending. Leading players: Robert Francis, Donna Reed.

<i>Family</i>	12-15	8-12
<i>Superior western</i>	<i>Superior western</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Unchained—Hall Bartlett Productions. Direction, Hall Bartlett. An unpretentious, deeply sincere picture which openly and unashamedly states that there is still honor among men and in which Todd Duncan's simple portrayal of human dignity is a deeply moving experience. This semidocumentary story of a prison without chains or bars is based on the life and work of Kenyon J. Scudder and his book *Prisoners Are People*. Granite-faced Elroy Hirsch plays an inmate who feels that he has been unjustly imprisoned for taking the law into his own hands and plans to escape. Mr. Duncan recommends the rebel for his own position on the men's council, even though he knows at the time that Hirsch plans to use it only to make his escape more easy. Mr. Duncan's singing of *Lost in the Stars* in the prison dormitory touches the heart. Special praise should be given to the writer and director, Hall Bartlett, who believes so genuinely in his theme that, despite technical deficiencies, he has produced a truly significant picture. Leading players: Todd Duncan, Chester Morris, Elroy Hirsch.

<i>Family</i>	12-15	8-12
<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>With interpretation</i>

White Christmas—Paramount. Direction, Michael Curtiz. There is a great deal more sugar frosting than Christmas snow in this star-sprinkled musical confection. A variety of lavish production numbers are brightly wrapped in Technicolor, made clearer and more luminous by Vista Vision. The slim plot concerns a team of entertainers who find that their former commanding general is stuck with a winter resort and no snow, and who therefore put on a show at his inn. Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye combine their talents (with a sister act played by Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen) to present old and new Irving Berlin tunes, a minstrel number with glowing Christmas colors, a satire on modern ballet drenched in purple, and finally a Christmas-card finish as the snow arrives. Leading players: Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen.

<i>Family</i>	12-15	8-12
<i>Holiday sweet</i>	<i>Holiday sweet</i>	<i>Yes</i>

ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Adventures of Hajji Baba—20th Century-Fox. Direction, Don Weiss. An "eastern" that in Cinemascope becomes a spectacle—large, lavish, ludicrous. Against the natural beauty of the desert, the bleached sand and rocks, and the blue sky, the

scanty costumes and jewels appear as tawdry as the plot itself. A headstrong Persian princess defies her caliph father and runs off to marry a desert sheik, protected by an adventuresome barber whom she promises to pay well. After endless hairbreadth escapes, the princess reaches her sheik only to find that Papa was right. Hajji Baba must scheme and strain all over again to rescue her and return her to her father's courtyard. There is an atmosphere of cruelty throughout the cheap, sexy story. Leading players: John Derek, Elaine Stewart.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

The Bamboo Prison—Columbia. Direction, Lewis Seiler. All the familiar types of prisoners of war are presented in this routine spy melodrama, which takes place in a Communist prison camp in northern Korea. There is the brave soldier, the fearful one, the intellectual, the engaging clown, the man with the dark skin, and the man with a foreign accent. An unpleasant addition to the list is a fake Catholic priest spreading Communism. As is customary in this sort of melodrama, the hero is an American tough guy. In his efforts to obtain evidence of atrocities and lists of missing prisoners he is helped by a Russian ballerina. There are many tense moments before his assignment is successfully accomplished, but the ending is closer to bathos than pathos. Fast paced and smoothly directed. Leading players: Robert Francis, Dianne Foster.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Matter of taste</i>	<i>Matter of taste</i>	<i>No</i>

Beau Brummell—MGM. Direction, Curtis Bernhardt. The glittering pageantry of a glamorous historic period is well displayed in this entertaining romantic tale. Although the key events of the picture actually took place when George Bryan Brummell was only ten years old, the pictorial backgrounds may be assumed to be reasonably accurate. Beau Brummell, arbiter of social elegance and friend of the Prince of Wales, is an intriguing figure. The broad outline of his life—his meteoric rise and his equally swift descent into poverty—is well told. The magnificent costumes and settings are matched by the virtuoso performance of Peter Ustinov as the Prince of Wales. Stewart Granger is suitably dashing as the Beau, Robert Morley excellent in a bit part, and Elizabeth Taylor a little wooden but very beautiful. Leading players: Stewart Granger, Elizabeth Taylor, Peter Ustinov, Robert Morley.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Entertaining</i>	<i>Entertaining</i>	<i>Entertaining</i>

Carmen Jones—20th Century-Fox. Direction, Otto Preminger. Against the settings of a World War II army camp, a parachute factory, and the city of Chicago, the opera *Carmen* is vibrantly performed in modern dress and idiom by a fine all-Negro cast. Bizet's music is intact but is provided with lively Hammerstein lyrics, which give the story freshness and vitality. Dorothy Dandridge, who plays Carmen Jones, sets the pace for an energetic and brightly hued production. Her portrayal of the fickle firebrand has a blow-torch intensity as she toys with the affections of the young soldier, Joe (Harry Belafonte), and the champion prize fighter, Husky Miller (Joe Adams). The Cinemascope production is embellished with more action than would be possible on the stage, but it is the music that takes top honors. It is poignant and passionate, smoothly integrated into the script, and clearly articulated by the operatic voices that have been expertly dubbed in for the leading roles. Pearl Bailey uses her own singing style to perfection. An unusual musical film of great vigor and impact. Leading players: Dorothy Dandridge, Harry Belafonte, Pearl Bailey, Joe Adams.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Rare musical treat</i>	<i>Pretty mature</i>	<i>No</i>

Fire over Africa—Columbia. Direction, Richard Sale. A stereotyped adventure story laid in Tangiers. A handsome woman is sent to this "wicked" place as government agent to help apprehend the leader of some notorious smugglers. She manages to accomplish her mission, at the same time exerting her feminine charms with great effectiveness, especially on a fresh American. The film is littered with the usual number of murders, bloody daggers, and intrigue. The Technicolor highlights heroine Maureen O'Hara's red hair very nicely. Leading players: MacDonald Carey, Maureen O'Hara.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Mediocre</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

The Human Jungle—Allied Artists. Direction, Joseph Newman. Technically expert is this melodrama about the murder of a strip-tease dancer and the reactions of city police at headquarters. Photography, direction, and acting are more than competent. However, what promises to be a serious study of

the problems that face city policemen quickly settles down to a routine cops-and-robbers film, closing with the usual chase in a conveniently deserted brewery. A great deal of the action revolves around a night club, where a tough blonde supplies the murderer with his alibi and presents some of the sordid aspects of such a life. Leading players: Gary Merrill, Jan Sterling.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Matter of taste</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

Jesse James' Women—United Artists. Direction, Donald Barry. Jesse James rides again, this time playing the role of a gentle, if irrational, Robin Hood. He and his brother Frank rob, fight, and pillage only to give away their ill-gotten gains to needy souls who cross their path—a child who wants a horse, a pastor who needs a church. An assorted group of shady feminine characters are enamored of the gunman and his exploits. Leading players: Donald Barry, Jack Beutel, Peggie Castle.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

Passion—RKO. Direction, Allan Dwan. What was obviously intended as highly emotional drama comes out as a tedious, unconvincing western melodrama. Cornel Wilde makes a perfunctory attempt to portray a man obsessed with the idea of revenge after his wife and grandparents are murdered by a terrorist band claiming land rights to his ranch. He takes the law into his own hands, bumping off the killers one by one with monotonous precision until only the ringleader is left. Leading players: Cornel Wilde, Yvonne de Carlo.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

The Shanghai Story—Republic. Direction, Frank Lloyd. In the Waldorf Hotel in Shanghai a group of westerners have been interned by the chief of police in order to find the spy he knows is among them. Also present is Tangier-born Ruth Roman, whose friendliness with the Chinese and the Russians alienates the budding affections of Doctor Edmond O'Brien. A routine spy thriller which gives no indication that the shooting war with China is ended. Leading players: Ruth Roman, Edmond O'Brien.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>

Sign of the Pagan—Universal-International. Direction, Douglas Sirk. Once again historical facts are juggled around by script-writers bent on concocting a conventional melodrama of romance and adventure. This ambitious Cinemascope production is laid in the fifth century A.D., when the divided Roman Empire, with its twin capitals at Constantinople and Ravenna, was in mortal danger from Attila the Hun and his barbarian hordes. Yet the film makes little attempt to show the real causes of the rivalries and intrigues between the two courts or even to suggest that this was one of the really decisive periods in the history of our Western civilization. Instead we have rugged Jeff Chandler, who plays the centurion and later Emperor Marcian. He pretty well saves the situation single-handed as he takes over the dissolute Eastern Empire, rides off to Rome, sends Attila packing, and becomes emperor as a reward. Marcian was without question a good ruler, but he was by no means solely responsible for Attila's defeat. Jack Palance makes the latter an interesting and sympathetic figure. Leading players: Jeff Chandler, Jack Palance, Rita Gam.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>

Sleeping Tiger—Astor. Direction, Victor Hanburg. A shallow, vaguely unpleasant melodrama that describes a psychiatrist's tenuous efforts to reform a young psychopath, who becomes involved with the doctor's wife. Alexander Knox is a good actor, but the part of the psychiatrist is just too artificial for him. Leading players: Alexander Knox, Dirk Bogarde, Alexis Smith.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Flimsy</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

A Star Is Born—Warner Brothers. Direction, George Cukor. A radiant Judy Garland returns to the screen in this brilliant musical from the famous Janet Gaynor-Fredric March drama of the same name. In the role of a talented singer whose chance encounter with a sensitive but alcoholic actor brings her stardom, love, marriage, and heartbreak, she reveals her new maturity as an actress and her versatility as a performer. Wonderfully consistent is her characterization of a courageous, loyal, and unaffected human being. Her singing is equally sincere. Whether she is rendering a simple ballad, capering jauntily about as a ragged newsboy, depicting the career of an entertainer "born in a trunk," or hilariously spoofing elaborate

Hollywood production numbers, she never fails to display her great talent. James Mason is both moving and convincing as the mentally ill actor whose own career is on the down grade. His suicide, however, raises a question of values, implying as it does that his wife's career is of more importance than a human life. George Cukor has directed this three-hour picture with a knowing and compassionate hand. The supporting roles are finely played. The Cinemascope photography—with its vivid scenes of Hollywood life, the actual interiors of motion picture studios, and the beautiful Pacific coast—is outstanding. Leading players: Judy Garland, James Mason.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Brilliantly entertaining</i>	<i>Ditto</i>	<i>Mature</i>

This Is My Love—RKO. Direction, Stuart Heisler. All her life Vida Dove has played second fiddle to her pretty sister, Evelyn even marries the man Vida wanted. When he becomes a paraplegic, Vida is called in to help keep the family together, and the two sisters run a roadside restaurant in alternate shifts. Dan Duryea as the husband is never free from trembling anxiety or gnawing rage. Into this highly charged atmosphere a new emotion is added when both sisters become infatuated with a gas station attendant. The intense, overwrought emotional quality of the film quickly subsides, however, when murder is committed and the police seek the killer. A melodramatic hodgepodge with some embarrassingly hammy sequences and some inexcusably clumsy work in the cutting room. Leading players: Dan Duryea, Linda Darnell, Faith Domergue.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Matter of taste</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

Twist of Fate—United Artists. Direction, David Miller. Filmed in Nice and on the Riviera, this foolish potboiler with plushy trimmings will interest fans of Ginger Rogers, whose attractive young husband plays leading man. We see the glamorous Miss Rogers living in a lavish home supplied, along with diamond bracelets and fur coats, by a man who has promised to marry her once his divorce has come through. In the meantime she meets a picturesque young artist and discovers the joys of pottery making under his attentive supervision. The first man turns out to be a big-time counterfeiter, who throws her around a bit when he thinks he is being two-timed. The plot finally winds around to a happy ending, if you can call it that. Sleazy fare. Leading players: Ginger Rogers, Jacques Bergerac, Herbert Lom.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Shoddy</i>	<i>No</i>

Ugetsu—Daiei Film Production, released by Harrison and Davison. Direction, Kenji Mizoguchi. The Japanese camera dallies romantically with the supernatural in this exquisitely photographed legend of sixteenth-century love and violence based on the classic tales of Akimori Neda. An eerie, mist-shrouded lake, a delicate silhouette of slender trees against which frightened figures darkly flee, the shadowed garden of the strange, lovely Lady Wakasa—all have a trance-like foreboding, a preoccupation with death. Scenes of brutal savagery are woven into the stories of two ambitious peasants, a greedy potter and a farmer, and their devoted but less fortunate wives. English subtitles. Leading players: Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, Kinuyo Tanaka.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Interesting</i>	<i>Mature</i>	<i>No</i>

Woman's World—20th Century-Fox. Direction, Jean Negulesco. Acid commentary on certain social practices by big business executives is smartly phrased in this sophisticated satire. Clifton Webb, as a lordly tycoon, invites three of his young executives and their wives to New York in order to select one of the men to fill an important post in his fabulous motor-car industry. Much is made of the importance of a docile as well as socially gifted wife, but unfortunately none of the women, for various reasons, fits the slick, inhuman pattern Mr. Webb has conceived. Not the least of the film's penetrating ironies is the title. Excellently acted with distinguished photography of New York City. Leading players: Clifton Webb, June Allyson, Lauren Bacall, Van Heflin, Fred MacMurray, Arlene Dahl.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Clever but fluffy</i>	<i>Ditto</i>	<i>No</i>

The Yellow Mountain—Universal-International. Direction, Jesse Hibbs. Affectionately brutal fist fights between two good friends live up an otherwise routinely violent western. It has to do with a gold mine in Old Nevada, a confused struggle between "good" and "bad" forces over its possession, and the necessary minor romance. Leading players: Lex Barker, Howard Duff.

<i>Adults</i>	15-18	12-15
<i>Matter of taste</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No</i>

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the boy and the star

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